TRAVELS IN FRANCE.

VOLUME FIRST.

Serfojee Rajah 1817

TRAVELS IN FRANCE,

DURING THE YEARS

1814-15.

COMPRISING

A RESIDENCE AT PARIS,

DURING THE STAY OF

THE ALLIED ARMIES,

AND AT AIX, AT THE PERIOD OF THE LANDING OF BONAPARTE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE deference and respect which every Author ought to pay to the public opinion, independent of all regard for his own character, should operate in preventing the intrusion of a hasty production on the Public; and the Author of the following observations on the State of France is aware, that no excuse on his part will be accepted, as a sufficient apology, for infringing on the public rights. In palliation of his conduct, he only pleads his anxiety to avail himself

of the present moment, when a general interest is excited, and the thirst for information on the subject of France, yet remains unabated.

The history of that country, during the last three years, has been so important to Europe, and the interests of Great Britain have been so much involved in the great contests which have taken place, that many of those who have visited France, have felt it a kind of duty to communicate to their countrymen the observations which they have made on the situation, character, and prospects of a nation placed in so singular and so eventful circumstances.

The Author of the following pages claims no other respect from his Readers, than that which may be considered due to the sincere wish of fulfilling that duty. The state of his health depriving him of the means of discharging the duties of his own peculiar office, had made it advisable for him to pass

the winter in the south of France. He did not wish to be entirely idle, and under the favourable circumstances, afforded by an intercourse with a wide circle of acquaintances in that part of the country, he endeavoured to collect some information, which might be better entitled to credit than the vague reports of newspapers and of party writers. If the information he has collected is scanty, his Readers may at least believe that it is authentic, and that the whole work is composed *from materials collected in France.*

He was particularly anxious to make a selection from the great number of anecdotes of Napoleon which he heard in France, and he esteemed himself fortunate in having obtained the assistance, in this part of his undertaking, of one of the ablest and most candid, as well as most respectable inhabitants of Aix, in Provence. This gentleman had been at much pains to enquire into the truth of the many stories in circulation, and he had the goodness to draw up a long me-

moir on the life and character of Napoleon, for the use of the Author, which, after getting the greater part by heart, and making extracts of the principal anecdotes, he (the Author) was unfortunately under the necessity of destroying before he left Provence, the political state of the country at that time making it dangerous for him to have such a paper in his possession. Almost all the anecdotes inserted in this work, however, were contained in that paper, and none are given which are not generally believed in France.

For much information in the first volume, relating to Paris, particularly during the first residence of the allied armies, the Author confesses himself indebted to the journals of a few friends who had preceded him in their visit to the capital, and saw it under these interesting circumstances.

A great part of his own observations, as well as of those which he found in these

journals, related to subjects, the interest of which was naturally transient, and has now, in a great measure, subsided. He has endeavoured, therefore, to select those topics connected with the state of France, which seemed to possess the most permanent interest, and the importance of which appeared to be the least affected by recent political events.

In order to give to travellers a correct idea of French travelling, he has introduced a short Journal of his route from Paris to Aix, and from Aix to Bourdeaux. From this Journal, he is afraid the general reader will not derive much amusement; but it is meant for the traveller, and contains a short enumeration of the difficulties he will meet with.

As the portions of French introduced into the first volume are very small, it was not deemed necessary to translate them; but in

the second volume this has been invariably observed; and, in order to have preserved uniformity, the Author is sorry that he did not follow the same plan with both volumes.

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The Author has to apologise for the magnitude of the following list, which has been occasioned by his unavoidable absence from town during the time that the latter part of both volumes was printed.

ERRATA.

Page 47. line 6. from the bottom, for *du* read *des.*
127. line 11. for *C'est ne* pas read *Ce n'est* pas.
153. line 10. from the bottom, for *induced* read *rendered.*
159. line 21. for *meekness* read *richness.*
160. line 6. for *Hero* read *Nero.*
162. line 3. for *horror* read *power.*
165. line 14. for *uncompassionate* read *unimpassioned.*
168. line 16. for *train* read *ray.*
170. line 15. for *Denis* read *Ducis.*
171. line 15. for *reveals* read *reveres.*
178. line 4. for *proved* read *pomp*, line 8. for *aims* read *arms.*
179. line 17. for *awakened* read *loosened.*
185. line 15. for *reason* read *reserve.*
186. line 13. for *reposing* read *reviving.*
188. line 2. from the bottom, for *humane* read *humorous.*
195. line 9. for *lesser* read *latter*, and for *adaption* read *adaptation.*
199. line 6. for *Corasmera* read *Caravansera.*
203. line 2. for *bearing* read *leaving*,—and line 14. for *abased* read *abused.*
245. line 16. after *those* insert *parts.*
254. line 5. from the bottom, for *cowfolds* read *corn fields.*
277. line 5. for *Alta Vista* read *Allee Verte.*
279. line 17. for *joumatin* read *journatier.*
282. line 12. for *camp* read *cause.*

VOLUME I.

CHAPTER I.

JOURNEY TO PARIS.

We passed through Kent on our way to France, on Sunday the first of May 1814. This day's journey was very delightful. The whole scenery around us, —the richness of the fields and woods, then beginning to assume the first colours of spring; the extent and excellence of the cultivation; the thriving condition of the towns, and the smiling aspect of the neat and clean villages through which we passed; the luxuriant bloom of the fruit-trees surrounding them; the number of beautiful villas adapted to the accommodation of the middle ranks of society; the crowds of well-dressed peasantry going to and returning from church; the frank and cheerful countenances of the men, and beauty of the women—all presented a most pleasing spectacle. If we had not

proposed to cross the channel, we should have compared all that we now saw with our recollections of Scotland; and the feeling of the difference, although it might have increased our admiration, would perhaps have made us less willing to acknowledge it. But when we were surveying England with a view to a comparison with France, the difference of its individual provinces was overlooked;—we took a pride in the apparent happiness and comfort of a people, of whom we knew nothing more, than that they were our countrymen; and we rejoiced, that the last impression left on our minds by the sight of our own country was one, which we already anticipated that no other could efface.

We landed, on the evening of the 2d, about three miles from Calais, and walked into the town. The appearance of the country about Calais does not differ materially from that in the immediate neighbourhood of Dover, which is much less fertile than the greater part of Kent, but the cottages are decidedly inferior to the English. The first peculiarity that struck us was the grotesque appearance of the *Douaniers*, who came to examine us on the coast; and when we had passed through the numerous guards, and been examined at the guard-houses, previously to our admission into the town, the gates of which had been shut, we had already observed, what subsequent observation confirmed, that the air and manner which we call military are in very little estimation among the French soldiers. The general appearance of the French soldiery cannot be better de-

scribed than it has been by Mr Scott: "They "seemed rather the fragments of broken-up gangs, "than the remains of a force that had been steady, "controlled, and lawful." They have almost uniformly, officers and men, much expression of intelligence, and often of ferocity, in their countenances, and much activity in their movements; but there are few of them whom an Englishman, judging from his recollection of English soldiers, would recognise to belong to a regular army.

The lower orders of inhabitants in Calais hailed the arrival of the English strangers with much pleasure, loudly proclaiming, however, the interested motives of their joy. A number of blackguard-looking men gathered round us, recommending their own services, and different hotels, with much vehemence, and violent altercations among themselves; and troops of children followed, crying, "Vivent "les Anglois—Give me one sous." In our subsequent travels, we were often much amused by the importunities of the children, who seem to beg, in many places, without being in want, and are very ingenious in recommending themselves to travellers; crying first, Vive le Roi; if that does not succeed, Vive l'Empereur; that failing, Vive le Roi d'Angleterre; and professing loyalty to all the sovereigns of Europe, rather than give up the hopes of *sous*.

Having reached the principal inn, we found that all the places in the diligence for Paris were taken for the ten following days. By this time, in consequence of the communication with France being

opened, several new coaches had been established between London and Dover, but no such measure had been thought of on the road between Calais and Paris. There was no want of horses, as we afterwards found, belonging to the inns on the roads, but this seemed to indicate strongly want of ready money among the innkeepers. However, there were at Calais a number of "voitures" of different kinds, which had been little used for several years; one of which we hired from a "magasin des chaises," which reminded us of the Sentimental Journey, and set out at noon on the 3d, for Paris, accompanied by a French officer who had been a prisoner in Scotland, and to whose kindness and attentions we were much indebted.

We were much struck with the appearance of poverty and antiquity about Calais, which afforded a perfect contrast to the Kentish towns; and all the country towns, through which we afterwards passed in France, presented the same general character. The houses were larger than those of most English country towns, but they were all old; in few places out of repair, but nowhere newly built, or even newly embellished. There were no newly painted houses, windows, carriages, carts, or even sign-posts; the furniture, and all the interior arrangements of the inns, were much inferior to those we had left; their external appearance stately and old-fashioned; the horses in the carriages were caparisoned with white leather, and harnessed with ropes; the men who harnessed them were of mean appear-

ance, and went about their work as if they had many other kinds of work to do. There were few carts, and hardly any four-wheeled carriages to be seen in the streets, and it was obvious that the internal communications of this part of the country were very limited. There appeared to be few houses fitted for the residence of persons of moderate incomes, and hardly any villas about the town to which they might retire after giving up business. All the lower ranks of people, besides being much worse looking than the English, were much more coarsely clothed, and they seemed utterly indifferent about the appearance of their dress. Very few of the men wore beaver hats, and hardly two had exactly the same kind of covering for their heads.

The dress of the women of better condition, particularly their high-crowned bonnets, and the ruffs about their necks, put us in mind of the pictures of old English fashions. The lower people appeared to bear a much stronger resemblance to some of the Highland clans, and to the Welsh, than to any other inhabitants of Britain.

On the road between Calais and Boulogne, we began to perceive the peculiarities of the husbandry of this part of France. These are just what were described by Arthur Young; and although it is possible, as the natives uniformly affirm, that the agriculture has improved since the revolution, this improvement must be in the details of the operations, and in the extent of land under tillage, not in the principles of the art. The most striking to the eye

of a stranger are the want of enclosures, the want of pasture lands and of green crops, and the consequent number of bare fallows, on many of which a few sheep and long-legged lean hogs, are turned out to pick up a miserable subsistence. The common rotation appears to be a three year's one; fallow, wheat, and oats or barley. On this part of the road, the ground is almost all under tillage, but the soil is poor; there is very little wood, and the general appearance of the country is therefore very bleak. In the immediate neighbourhood of Boulogne, it is better clothed, and varied by some pasture fields and gardens. The ploughs go with wheels. They are drawn by only two horses, but are clumsily made, and evidently inferior to the Scotch ploughs. They, as well as the carts, are made generally of green unpeeled wood, like those in the Scotch Highlands, and are never painted. This absence of all attempt to give an air of neatness or smartness to any part of their property—this indifference as to its appearance, is a striking characteristic of the French people over a great part of the country.

It is likewise seen, as before observed, in the dress of the lower orders; but here it is often combined with a fantastic and ludicrous display of finery. An English dairy-maid or chamber-maid, ploughman or groom, shop-keeper or mechanic, has each a dress consistent in its parts, and adapted to the situation and employment of the wearer. But a country girl in France, whose bedgown and petticoat are of the coarsest materials, and scantiest dimensions, has a

pair of long dangling ear-rings, worth from 30 to 40 francs. A carter wears an opera hat, and a ballad-singer struts about in long military boots; and a blacksmith, whose features are obscured by the smoke and dirt which have been gathering on them for weeks, and whose clothes hang about him in tatters, has his hair newly frizzed and powdered, and his long queue plaited on each side, all down his back, with the most scrupulous nicety.

Akin to this shew of finery in some parts of their dress, utterly inconsistent with the other parts of it, and with their general condition, is the disposition of the lower orders in France, even in their intercourse with one another, to ape the manners of their superiors. "An English peasant," as Mr Scott has well remarked, "appears to spurn courtesy from "him, in a bitter sense of its inapplicability to his "condition." This feeling is unknown in France. A French soldier hands his "bien aimée" into a restorateur's of the lowest order, and supplies her with fruits and wine, with the grace and foppery of a Parisian "petit maitre," and with the gravity of a "philosophe."—"Madame," says a scavenger in the streets of Paris, laying his hand on his heart, and making a low bow to an old woman, cleaning shoes at the door of an inn, "J'espere que vous vous portez "bien."—"Monsieur," she replies, dropping a courtesy with an air of gratitude and profound respect, "Vous me faites d'honneur; je me porte a mer-"veille."

This peculiarity of manner in the lower orders,

will generally, it is believed, be found connected with their real degradation and insignificance in the eyes of their superiors. It is precisely because they are not accustomed to look with respect to those of their own condition, and because their condition is not respected by others, that they imitate the higher ranks. An English coachman or stable boy is taught to believe, that a certain demeanour befits his situation; and he will certainly expose himself to more sneers and animadversions, by assuming the manners of the rank next above him in society, than the highest peer of the realm will by assuming his. But Frenchmen of the same rank are fain to seek that respectability from manner, which is denied to the lowness of their condition and the vulgarity of their occupation; and they therefore assume the manner which is associated in their minds, and in the minds of their observers, with situations acknowledged to be respectable.

It is also to be observed, that the power of ridicule, which has so much influence in the formation of manner, is much less in France than in England. The French have probably more relish for true wit than any other people; but their perception of humour is certainly not nearly so strong as that of our countrymen. Their ridicule is seldom excited by the awkward attempts of a stranger to speak their language, and as seldom by the inconsistencies which appear to us ludicrous in the dress and behaviour of their countrymen.

These causes, operating gradually for a length of

time, have probably produced that remarkable politeness of manners which is so pleasing to a stranger in a number of the lower orders in France, and which appears so singular at the present time, as revolutionary ideas, military habits, and the example of a military court, have given a degree of roughness and even ferocity to the manners of many of the higher orders of Frenchmen, with which it forms a curious contrast. It is, however, in its relation to Englishmen at least, a fawning, cringing, interested politeness; less truly respectable than the obliging civility of the common people in England, and in substance, if not in appearance, still farther removed from the frank, independent, disinterested courtesy of the Scottish Highlanders.

Our entry into Boulogne was connected with several striking circumstances. To an Englishman, who, for many years, had heard of the mighty preparations which were made by the French in the port of Boulogne for the invasion of his country, the first view of this town could not but be peculiarly interesting. We accordingly got out of our *voiture* as quickly as possible, and walked straight to the harbour. Here the first objects that presented themselves were, on one side, the last remains of the grand flotilla, consisting of a few hulks, dismantled and rotting in the harbour; on the other side, the Prussian soldiers drawn up in regiments on the beach. Nothing could have recalled to our minds more strongly the strength of that power which our country had so

long opposed, nor the magnificent result which had at length attended her exertions. The forces destined for the invasion, and which were denominated by anticipation the army of England, had been encamped around the town. The characteristic arrogance—the undoubting anticipation of victory—the utter thoughtlessness—the unsinking vivacity of the French soldiery, were then at the highest pitch. Some little idea of the gay and light-hearted sentiments with which they contemplated the invasion of England, may be formed from the following song, which was sung to us with unrivalled spirit and gesticulation as we came in sight of Boulogne by our fellow-traveller, who had himself served in the army of England, and who informed us it was then commonly sung by the soldiers in the ranks.

SONG.

Francais ! le bal va se r'ouvrir,
Et vous aimez la danse,
L'Allemande vient de finir,
Mais l'Anglaise commence.

D'y figurer tous nous Francais
Seront parbleu bien aise,
Car s'ils n'aiment pas les Anglais,
Ils aiment les Anglaises.

D' abord par le pas de Calais
Il faut entrer en danse,
Le son des instrumens Francais
Marquera la cadence ;

Et comme les Anglais ne scauroient
Que danser les Anglaises,
Bonaparte leur montrera
Les figures Francaises.

Allons mes amis de grand rond,
En avant, face a face,
Francais le bas, restez d'a plomb,
Anglais changez les places.

Vous Monsieur Pitt vous balancez,
Formez la chaine Anglaise,
Pas de cotè—croisez—chassez—
C'est la danse Francaise!

The humour of this song depends on the happy application of the names of the French dances, and the terms employed in them, to the subjects on which it is written, the conclusion of the German campaigns, and the meditated invasion of England.

The Prussians who were quartered at Boulogne, and all the adjoining towns and villages, belonged to the corps of General Von York. Most of the infantry regiments were composed in part of young recruits, but the older soldiers, and all the cavalry had a truly military appearance; and their swarthy weather-beaten countenances, their coarse and patched, but strong and serviceable dresses and accoutrements, the faded embroidery of their uniforms, and the insignia of orders of merit with which almost all the officers, and many of the men, were decorated,

bore ample testimony to their participation in the labours and the honours of the celebrated army of Silesia.

Some of them who spoke French, when we enquired where they had been, told us, in a tone of exultation, rather than of arrogance, that they had entered Paris—" le sabre a la main."

The appearance of the country is considerably better in Picardy than in Artois, but the general features do not materially vary until you reach the Oise. The peasantry seem to live chiefly in villages, through which the road passes, and the cottages composing which, resemble those of Scotland more than of England. They are generally built in rows; many of them are white washed, but they are very dirty, and have generally no gardens attached to them; and a great number of the inhabitants seem oppressed with poverty to a degree unknown in any part of Britain. The old and infirm men and women who assembled round our carriage, when it stopped in any of these villages, to ask for alms, appeared in the most abject condition; and, so far from observing, as one English traveller has done, that there are few beggars in France, it appeared to us, that there are few inhabitants of many of these country villages who are ashamed to beg.

To this unfavourable account of the aspect of this part of France, there are, however, exceptions: We were struck with the beauty of the village of Nouvion, between Montreuil and Abbeville, which resemble

strongly the villages in the finest counties of England: The houses here have all gardens surrounding them, which are the property of the villagers. In the neighbourhood of Abbeville, and of Beauvais, there are also some neat villages; and the country around these towns is rich, and well cultivated, and beautifully diversified with woods and vineyards; and, in general, in advancing southwards, the country, though still uninclosed, appears more fertile and better clothed. Many of the villages are surrounded with orchards, and long rows of fruit-trees extend from some of them for miles together along the sides of the roads; long regular rows of elms, and Lombardy poplars are also very common, particularly on the road sides; and, in some places, chateaux are to be seen, the situation of which is generally delightful; but most of them are uninhabited, or inhabited by poor people, who do not keep them in repair; and their deserted appearance contributes even more than the straight avenues of trees, and gardens laid out in the Dutch taste, which surround them, to confirm the impression of *antiquity* which is made on the mind of an Englishman by almost all that he sees in travelling through France.

The roads in this, as in many other parts of the country, are paved in the middle, straight, and very broad, and appear adapted to a much more extensive intercourse than now exists between the different provinces.

The country on the banks of the Oise (which we crossed at Beaumont), and from thence to Paris,

is one of the finest parts of France. The road passes, almost the whole way, through a majestic avenue of elm trees: Instead of the continual recurrence of corn fields and fallows, the eye is here occasionally relieved by the intervention of fields of lucerne and saintfoin, orchards and vineyards; the country is rich, well clothed with wood, and varied with rising grounds, and studded with chateaux; there are more carriages on the roads and bustle in the inns, and your approach to the capital is very obvious. Yet there are strong marks of poverty in the villages, which contain no houses adapted to the accommodation of the middling ranks of society; the soil is richer, but the implements of agriculture, and the system of husbandry, are very little better than in Picardy: the cultivation, every where tolerable, is nowhere excellent; there are no new farmhouses or farm-steadings; no signs of recent agricultural improvements; and the chateaux, in general, still bear the aspect of desertion and decay.

This last peculiarity of French scenery is chiefly owing to the great subdivision of property which has taken place in consequence of the confiscation of church lands, and properties of the noblesse and emigrants, and of the subsequent sale of the national domains, at very low or even nominal prices, to the lower orders of the peasantry. To such a degree has this subdivision extended, that in many parts of France there is no proprietor of land who does not labour with his own hands in the cultivation of his property. The influence of this state of property on

the prosperity of France, and the gradual changes which it will undergo in the course of time, will form an interesting study for the political economist; but in the meantime, it will almost prevent the possibility of collecting an adequate number of independent and enlightened men to represent the landed interest of France in any system of national representation.

In travelling from Calais to Paris, we did not observe so great a want of men in the fields and villages as we had been led to expect. The men whom we saw, however, were almost all above the age of the conscription. In several places, we saw women holding the plough, but in general the proportion of women to men, employed in the fields, appeared hardly greater than may be seen during most of the operations of husbandry in the best cultivated districts of Scotland. On enquiry among the peasants, we found the conscription, and the whole of Bonaparte's system of government, held in much abhorrence, particularly among the women; yet they did not appear to feel it so deeply as we had anticipated; and of him, individually, they were more disposed to speak in terms of ridicule than of indignation. "Il "a parti pour l'ile d'Elbe (said they)—bon voyage!" It was obvious that public affairs, even in those critical moments, occupied much less of their attention than of persons of the same rank in England: their spirits are much less easily depressed; and it was easy to see that their domestic affections are less

powerful. The men shewed much jealousy of the allied troops; said they were superior to the French only in numbers; and often repeated, that one French soldier was equal to two Russians.

Although the old men and women whom we saw in the villages were generally in the most abject condition, yet the labourers employed in the fields appeared nearly as well dressed as the corresponding class in England; their wages were stated to be, over most of the country, from one franc to 25 sous a-day, and in the immediate neighbourhood of Paris, to be as high as two, or even three francs. In some places, we saw them dining on bread, pork, and cider; but the scarcity of live stock was such, that it was impossible to suppose that they usually enjoyed so good a fare. The interior of the cottages appeared, generally, to be ill furnished.

Every village and town through which we passed between Boulogne and Paris contained a number of the allied troops. At Beauvais, a town remarkable for its singular appearance, being almost entirely built of wood, and likewise for the beauty of its cathedral, the choir of which is reckoned the finest in France, we were first gratified with the sight of some hundreds of Russians, horse and foot, under arms. These troops were of the finest description, and belonged to the corps of the celebrated Wigtenstein.

We enquired of many of the lower people, in the towns and villages through which we passed, concerning the conduct of the allied troops in their quar-

ters, and the answers were almost uniformly—from the men, "Ils se comportent bien;" (frequently with the addition, "mais ils mangent comme des di-"ables:") and from the women, "Ils sont bons "enfans." We had very frequent opportunities of remarking the truth of the observation, that women have less bitterness against the enemies of their country than men. The Parisian ladies adopted fashions from the uniforms of almost all the allied troops whom they saw in Paris; many of them were exceedingly anxious for opportunities of seeing the Emperor of Russia, and the most distinguished leaders of the armies that had conquered France; and those who were acquainted with officers of rank belonging to these armies appeared, on all occasions, to be highly flattered with the attentions they received from them. The same was observable in the conduct of the lower ranks. In the suburbs of Paris, and in the neighbouring villages, where many of the allied troops were quartered, they appeared always on the best terms with the female inhabitants, and were often to be seen assisting them in their work, playing at battledore and shuttlecock with them in the streets, or strolling in their company along the banks of the Seine, and through the woods of St Cloud, evidently to the satisfaction of both parties.

CHAPTER II.

PARIS—THE ALLIED ARMIES.

To those whose attention had been long fixed on the great political revulsion which had brought the wandering tribes of the Wolga and the Don into the heart of France, and whose minds had been incessantly occupied for many months, previous to the time of which we speak, (as the minds of almost all Englishmen had been), with wishes for the success, and admiration of the exploits, of the brave troops who then occupied Paris, it may naturally be supposed, that even all the wonders of that capital were, in the first instance, objects of secondary consideration. It was not until our curiosity had been satisfied by the sight of the Emperor Alexander, the Duke of Wellington, Marshal Blucher, Count Platoff, and such numbers of

the Russian and Prussian officers and soldiers, as we considered a fair specimen of the whole armies, that we could find time to appreciate the beauties, even of the Apollo and the Venus.

The streets of Paris are always amusing and interesting, from the numbers and varieties of costumes and characters which they present; but at the time of which we speak, they might be considered as exhibiting an epitome of the greater part of Europe. Parties of Russian cuirassiers, Prussian lancers, and Hungarian hussars; Cossacks, old and young, from those whose beards were grey with age, to those who were yet beardless, cantering along after their singular fashion—their long lances, poised on their stirrups, and loosely fastened to their right arms, vibrating over their heads; long files of Russian and Prussian foragers, and long trains of Austrian baggage waggons, winding slowly through the crowd; idle soldiers of all services, French as well as allied, lounging about in their loose great coats and trowsers, with long crooked pipes hanging from their mouths; patroles of infantry parading about under arms, composed half of Russian grenadiers, and half of Parisian national guards; Russian coaches and four, answering to the description of Dr Clarke, the postillions riding on the off-horses, and dressed almost like beggars; Russian carts, drawn by four horses a-breast, and driven by peasants in the national costume; Polish Jews, with long black beards, dressed in black robes like the cassocks of English clergymen, with broad leathern belts—all mingled

with the Parisian multitude upon the Boulevards: and in the midst of this indiscriminate assemblage, all the business, and all the amusements of Paris, went on with increased alacrity and fearless confidence. The Palais Royal was crowded, morning, noon, and night, with Russian and Prussian officers, in full uniform, decorated with orders, whose noisy merriment, cordial manners, and careless profusion, were strikingly contrasted with the silence and sullenness of the French officers.

It is fortunately superfluous for us to enlarge on the appearance, or on the character of the Emperor Alexander. We were struck with the simplicity of the style in which he lived. He inhabited only one or two apartments in a wing of the splendid Elysee Bourbon—slept on a leather mattress, which he had used in the campaign—rose at four in the morning, to transact business—wore the uniform of a Russian General, with only the medal of 1812, (the same as is worn by every soldier who served in that campaign, with the inscription, in Russ, *Non nobis sed tibi Domine*); had a French guard at his door—went out in a chaise and pair, with a single servant and no guards, and was very regular in his attendance at a small chapel, where the service of the Greek church was performed. We had access to very good information concerning him, and the account which we received of his character even exceeded our anticipation. His humanity was described to us as almost unparalleled. He repeatedly left behind him, in marching with the army,

some of the medical men of his own staff, to dress the wounds of French soldiers whom he passed on the way; and it was a standing order of his, to his hospital staff, to treat wounded Russians and French exactly alike.

His conduct at the battle of Fere Champenoise, a few days before the capture of Paris, of which we had an account from eye-witnesses, may give an idea of his conduct while with the armies. The French column, consisting of about 5000 infantry, with some artillery, was attacked by the advanced guard of the allies, consisting of cavalry, with some horse-artillery, under his immediate orders. It made a desperate resistance, and its capture being an object of great importance, he sent away all his guards, even the Cossacks, and exposed himself to the fire of musketry for a long time, directing the movements of the troops. When the French squares were at length broken by the repeated charges of cavalry and Cossacks, he threw himself into the middle of them, at a great personal risk, that he might restrain the fury of the soldiers, exasperated by the obstinacy of the resistance; and although he could not prevent the whole French officers and men from being completely pillaged, many of them owed their lives to his interference. The French commander was brought to him, and offered him his sword, which he refused to accept, saying, he had defended himself too well.

It was stated also, that the wife and children of a General, who had been with the French army, were

brought to him, and that he placed a guard over them, which was overpowered in the confusion. The unfortunate woman was never more heard of, but he succeeded in recovering the children, had a bed made for them in his own tent, and kept them with him, until he reached Paris, when he ordered enquiry to be made for some of her relations, to whose care he committed them.

He was uniformly represented to us as a man not merely of the most amiable dispositions, but of superior understanding, and of a firm decided turn of mind. Of the share which he individually had in directing the operations of the allied armies, we do not pretend to speak with absolute certainty; but we had reason to know, that the general opinion in the Russian army was, that the principal movements were not merely subjected to his control, but guided by his advice; and he was certainly looked upon, by officers who had long served under him, as one of the ablest commanders in the allied armies.

He was much disconcerted, it was said, by the loss of the battle of Austerlitz; but his subsequent experience in war had given him the true military obstinacy, and he bore the loss of the battles of Lutzen and Bautzen with perfect equanimity; often saying, the French can still beat us, but they will teach us how to beat them; and we will conquer them by our *pertinacity*. The attachment of the Russian army, and especially of the guards to him, almost approaches to idolatry, and the effect of his pre-

sence on the exertions and conduct of his troops is wonderful.

As a specimen of the general feeling in the Russian army at the time they invaded France, we may mention the substance of a conversation which an officer of the Russian staff told us he had held with a private of the Russian guard on the march soon after the invasion. The soldier complained of the Emperor's proclamation, desiring them to consider as enemies only those whom they met in the field. " The French," said he, " came into our country, bringing hosts of Germans and Poles along with them;—they plundered our properties, burnt our houses, and murdered our families;—every Russian was their enemy. We have driven them out of Russia, we have followed them into Poland, into Germany, and into France; but wherever we go we are allowed to find none but friends. This," he added, " is very well for us guards, who know that pillage is unworthy of us; but the common soldiers and Cossacks do not understand it; they remember how their friends and relations have been treated by the French, and that remembrance *lies at their hearts.*"

We were shewn the projecting part of the heights of Belleville, immediately overlooking the Fauxbourg St Martin, which the Emperor Alexander reached, with the King of Prussia, the Prince Schwartzenburg, and the whole general staff, on the evening of the 30th of March. It was here that he received the deputation from Marshals Marmont and Mortier, who had

fought all day against a vast superiority of force, and been fairly overpowered, recommending Paris to the generosity of the allies. Thirty howitzers were placed on this height, and a few shells were thrown into the town, one or two of which, we were assured, reached as far as the Eglise de St Eustace; it is allowed on all hands that they fell within the Boulevards. The heights of Montmartre were at the same time stormed by the Silesian army, and cannon were placed on it likewise.—Paris was then at his mercy. After a year and a half of arduous contest, it was at length in his power to take a bloody revenge for the miseries which his subjects had suffered during the unprovoked invasion of Russia.—He ordered the firing to cease; assured the French deputation of his intention to protect the city; and issued orders to his army to prepare to march in, the next morning, in parade order. He put himself at their head, in company with the King of Prussia, and all the generals of high rank. After passing along the Boulevards to the Champs Elysees, the Sovereigns placed themselves under a tree, within a few yards of the spot where Louis XVI. and many other victims of the revolution had perished; and they saw the last man of their armies defile past the town and proceed to take a position beyond it before they entered it themselves.

At this time, the recollection of the fate of Moscow was so strong in the Russian army, and the desire of revenge was so generally diffused, not merely among the soldiers, but even among the superior of-

ficers, that they themselves said, nothing could have restrained them but the presence and positive commands of their Czar, nor could any other influence have maintained that admirable discipline in the Russian army, during its stay in France, which we have so often heard the theme of panegyric even among their most inveterate enemies.

It is not in the columns of newspapers, nor in the perishable pages of such a Journal as this, that the invincible determination, the splendid achievements, and the magnanimous forbearance of the Emperor of Russia and his brave army, during the last war, can be duly recorded; but when they shall have passed into history, we think we shall but anticipate the sober judgment of posterity by saying, that the foreign annals of no other nation, ancient or modern, will present, in an equal period of time, a spectacle of equal moral grandeur.

The King of Prussia was often to be seen at the Parisian theatres, dressed in plain clothes, and accompanied only by his son and nephew. The first time we saw him there, he was making some enquiries of a manager of the Theatre de l'Odeon, whom he met in the lobby; and the modesty and embarrassment of his manner were finely contrasted with the confident loquacity and officious courtesy of the Frenchman. He is known to be exceedingly averse to public exhibitions, even in his own country. He had gone through all the hardships and privations of the campaigns, had exposed himself with a gal-

lantry bordering on rashness in every engagement; his son and nephew always by his side; his coolness in action was the subject of universal admiration; and it was not without reason that he had acquired the name of the first soldier in his army. His brothers, who are fine looking men, took the command of brigades in the Silesian army, and did the duty of brigadiers to the satisfaction of the whole army.

We had the good fortune of seeing the Duke of Wellington at the opera, the first time that he appeared in public at Paris. He was received with loud applause, and the modesty of his demeanour, while it accorded with the impressions of his character, derived from his whole conduct, and the style of his public writings, sufficiently shewed, that his time had been spent more in camps than in courts. We were much pleased to find, that full justice was done to his merits as an officer by all ranks of the allied armies. On the day that he entered Paris, the watch-word in the whole armies in the neighbourhood was Wellington, and the countersign Talavera. We have often heard Russian and Prussian officers say, he is the hero of the war:—we have conquered the French by main force, but his triumphs are the result of superior skill.

We found, as we had expected, that Marshal Blucher was held in the highest estimation in the allied army, chiefly on account of the promptitude and decision of his judgment, and the unconquerable

determination of his character. We were assured, that notwithstanding the length and severity of the service in which he had been engaged during the campaign of 1814, he expressed the greatest regret at its abrupt termination; and was anxious to follow up his successes, until the remains of the French army should be wholly dispersed, and their leader unconditionally surrendered. An English gentleman who saw him at the time of the action, in which a part of his troops were engaged at Soissons, a few days previous to the great battle at Laon, gave a striking account of his cool collected appearance on that occasion. He was lying in profound silence, wrapped up in his cloak, on the snow, on the side of a hill overlooking the town, smoking his pipe, and occasionally looking through a telescope at the scene of action. At length he rose up, saying, it was not worth looking at, and would come to nothing. In fact, the main body of the French army was marching on Rheims, and he was obliged to retire and concentrate his forces, first on Craon, and afterwards on Laon, before he could bring on a general action.

He bore the fatigues of the compaign without any inconvenience, but fell sick on the day after he entered Paris, and resigned his command, requesting only of General Sacken, the governor of the town, that he would allot him lodgings from which he could look out upon Montmartre, the scene of his last triumph. He never appeared in public at Paris; but we had the pleasure of seeing him in a very interesting situation. We had gone to visit the Hotel des Invalides, and on

entering the church under the great dome, we found this celebrated commander, accompanied only by his son and another officer, leaning on the rails which encircle the monument of Turenne. We followed him into a small apartment off the church, where the bodies of Marshals Bessieres and Duroc, and the hearts of Generals Laroboissiere and Barraguay D'-Hilliers lay embalmed under a rich canopy of black velvet, in magnificent coffins, which were strewed with flowers every morning by the Dutchess of Istria, the widow of Bessieres, who came thither regularly after mass. This room was hung with black, and lighted only by a small lamp, which burnt under the canopy, and threw its light in the most striking manner on the grey hairs and expressive countenance of the old Marshal, as he stood over the remains of his late antagonists in arms. He heard the name of each with a slight inclination of his head, gazed on the coffins for some moments in silence, and then turned about, and, as if to shew that he was not to be moved by his recollections, he strode out of the chapel humming a tune.

We heard that he had vowed to recover possession of the sword of the great Frederic, which used to hang in the midst of the 10,000 standards of all nations, that waved under the lofty dome of this building; but on the day that the allies entered Paris, the standards were taken down and burnt, and the sword was broken to pieces, by an order, as was said, from Maria Louisa.

It is right to notice here, that the famous Silesian

army which he commanded, consisted originally of many more Russian troops than Prussians,—in the proportion, we were told, of four to one, although the proportion of the latter was afterwards increased. Indeed it was at first the intention of the Emperor of Russia to put himself at the head of this army; but he afterwards gave up that idea, saying, that he knew the Russians and Prussians would fight well, and act cordially together; but that the presence of the Sovereigns would be more useful in keeping together the heterogeneous materials composing the army then forming in Bohemia, which afterwards had the name of the grand army.

We have heard different opinions expressed as to the share which General Gneisenau, the chief of the staff of the Silesian army, had in directing the operations of that army. This General is universally looked on as an officer of first rate merit, and many manœuvres of great importance are believed to have been suggested by him; yet it was to the penetrating judgment and enthusiastic spirit of the old Marshal that the officers whom we saw seemed most disposed to ascribe their successes.

We were much struck by the courteous and dignified manners of old Count Platoff. Even at that time, before he had experienced British hospitality, he professed high admiration for the British character, individual as well as national, saying, that he looked on every Englishman as his brother; and he was equally candid in expressing his

detestation of the French, not even excepting the ladies. We, however, saw him receive one or two Frenchmen, who were presented to him by his friends, with his accustomed mildness. His countenance appeared to us expressive of considerable humour, and he addressed a few words to almost every Cossack of the guard whom he met in passing through the court of the Elysee Bourbon, which were always answered by a hearty laugh. During the two last campaigns of the war he had been almost constantly at head-quarters, and his advice, we were assured, was much respected.

On the night after the battle of Borodino, Count Platoff, we were told, bivouacked on the field, in front of the position originally occupied by the Russians*, and on the next day he covered their retreat with his Cossacks. One of the Princes of Hesse Philipsthal, an uncommonly handsome young man, who had volunteered to act as an aid-de-camp of his, had his leg shot away close to his side. Amputation was immediately performed above the middle of his thigh; he was laid on a peasant's cart and carried 350 versts almost without stopping. However, he recovered perfectly, and petitioned the Emperor to be allowed to wear ever after the Cossack uniform. We saw

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* This statement, which we had from an officer who was with him at the time, may be easily reconciled with the account of the battle given by La Baume, which is in some measure inconsistent in its own parts.

him in it at Paris, going on crutches; but regretting in strong terms that he was to see no more fighting.

On the day before the French entered Moscow, Count Platoff, and some other officers, from one of whom we had this anecdote, breakfasted with Count Rostapchin at his villa in the vicinity of the town, which it had been the delight of his life to beautify and adorn. After breakfast, Count Rostapchin assembled his servants and retainers; and after saying that he hoped his son and latest descendants would always be willing to make a similar sacrifice for the good of their country, he took a torch, set fire to the building with his own hands, and waited until it was consumed. He then rode into the town to superintend the destruction of some warehouses full of clothes, of a number of carts, and of other things which might be useful to the enemy. But he did not, as we were assured by his son, whom we met at Paris, order the destruction of the town. The French, enraged at the loss of what was most valuable to them, according to the uniform account of the Russians, set fire in a deliberate and methodical manner to the different streets. It is but justice to say, however, that French officers, who had been at Moscow, denied the truth of the latter part of this statement.

The Russian troops in the neighbourhood of Paris, were under the immediate command of General Count Miloradovitch, a man of large property, and unbounded generosity, and an enthusiast in

his profession. He had been in the habit of always making the troops under his command some kind of present on his birth-day. During the retreat of the French from Moscow, this day came round when he was not quite prepared for it. "I have no money "here," said he to his soldiers; "but yonder," pointing to a French column, "is a present worthy "of you and of me." This address was a prelude to one of the most successful attacks, made during the pursuit, on the French rear-guard.

The other Russian commanders, whom we heard highly spoken of by the Russian officers whom we met, were, the Marshal commanding, Barclay de Tolly, in whose countenance we thought we could trace the indications of his Scotch origin;—he is an old man, and was commonly represented as, "sage, "prudent, tres savant dans la guerre." Wigtenstein, who is much younger, and is designated as "ardent, impetueux, entreprenant," &c.—Benigsen, who is an old man, but very active, and represented to be as fond of fighting as Blucher himself.—Count Langeron, and Baron Sacken, the commanders of corps in the Silesian army. The former is a French emigrant, but has been long in the Russian service, and highly distinguished himself. The latter is an old man, but very spirited, and highly esteemed for his honourable character: in his capacity of Governor of Paris, he gave very general satisfaction.—Woronzoff, who, as is well known, was educated in England, and who distinguished himself at Borodino, and in the army

of the north of Germany, and afterwards in France under Blucher—Winzingerode, one of the best cavalry officers, formerly in the Austrian service—Czernicheff, the famous partisan, a gallant gay young man, whose characteristic activity is strongly marked in his countenance—Diebzitch, a young staff officer of the first promise—Lambert (of French extraction) and Yermoloff: This last officer commanded the guards when we were at Paris, and was represented as a man of excellent abilities, and of a most determined character.

To shew the determined spirit of some of the Russian generals, we may mention an anecdote of one of them, which we repeatedly heard. On one occasion, the troops under the command of this general were directed to defile over a bridge, under a very heavy fire from the enemy. Observing some hesitation in their movements, he said, with perfect coolness, "If they don't go forward, I will "take care they shall not come back;" and planted a battery of 12 pounders in their rear, pointing directly at the bridge, in view of which they forced the passage in the most gallant style.

The spirit of emulation which prevailed in all ranks of the Russian army, during the war, was worthy of the cause in which they were engaged. The following anecdote, we think, deserves commemoration. Two officers of rank had aspired to the same situation in the army, and exerted all their influence to obtain it. The successful candidate had the command of the famous redoubt at Borodino,

when it was carried by the French. The other, who had a subordinate command just behind it, immediately came up to him, and asked leave to retake it for him. No, replied he; if you go there, I must be along with you. They collected what force they could, entered the redoubt together, and regained it at the point of the bayonet; but the officer who originally commanded in it, was killed by the side of his rival. The latter, immediately after the battle, was promoted to the situation which he had so ardently desired; but his enjoyment of it was long and visibly embittered by the recollection of the event to which he owed his appointment.

The number of Russian prisoners taken by the French during the war, was very trifling, and we were assured, that there was no instance in the whole course of it, of a single Russian battalion or squadron laying down its arms. The number of prisoners taken by the Cossacks alone, from the time when the French left Moscow, until the passage of the Niemen, was 90,000, and the number of cannon 550. It is true, that these were for the most part stragglers, and men unable to fight; but it must be remembered, that many of them could only have been overtaken in their flight by these hardy and enterprising troops. To prove the value of the service rendered by the Cossacks, it is only necessary to observe, that many of the officers who distinguished themselves most in all the campaigns, Platoff, Orloff Denizoff, Wasilchikoff, Czernicheff, Tettenborn, &c. commanded Cossacks almost exclu-

sively, and attributed much of their success to the quality of their troops. Most of the Cossacks whom we saw, appeared to be well-disciplined, and had a truly military air; and we were told, that all the 83 regiments of Cossacks are at present in a state of tolerable discipline. We cannot go so far as Dr Clarke in praise of their cleanliness, but we often observed their native easy courtesy of manner; and there can be no doubt, as he observes, of their being a much handsomer race than the generality of Russians. Their figures are more graceful, and their features are higher, and approach often to the Roman style of countenance. One troop of the Cossacks of the guards, composed of those from the Black Sea, attracted our particular admiration; and the noble, manly figures of the men, the elegant forms of the horses, and the picturesque appearance of the arms and uniforms of the whole body of Cossacks of the guard were very striking. The hereditary Prince of Georgia was at Paris as one of the Colonels of this regiment, and his figure and countenance were such as might have rendered him remarkable, even in his native country, in which the "human form divine" is understood to attain its highest perfection.

The Cossacks were kept in good order when under the inspection of their officers; but during the campaigns, they were often obliged to act in patroles, two or three together, at a distance from their officers; and in these situations, it may be supposed that they would commit many excesses. Immedi-

ately after a battle, they plundered all they met, and at all times and in all places, they looked on horses as fair game, insomuch, that it was often remarked in the allied armies, that they believed horses to have been created for none but Cossacks. It was said, that almost every Cossack of the corps of Czernicheff was worth from L.300 to L.400 in money and watches, which most of them spent much after the manner of British sailors.

Some idea of the expenditure of human life, during the campaign of 1812, may be formed from the following facts, which we had from unquestionable authority: The number of killed and wounded on both sides at the battle of Borodino, which did not extend from flank to flank more than three English miles, was ascertained to exceed 75,000 men. Eighteen thousand wounded Russians were dressed on the field, and sent off in carts. When the Russian army crossed the Niemen, in pursuit of the French, they left behind them 87,000 sick and wounded in hospitals, of which number 63,000 were wounded. The whole number of human bodies, Russian and French, men, women and children, which were collected and buried or burnt after the retreat, from Moscow to the Niemen, exceeded 300,000.

The officers of the Russian medical staff spoke in terms of the utmost indignation of the conduct of the French medical staff, in deserting their charge on the approach of the Russian armies. A great part of the town of Wilna, and surrounding villages,

had been converted into hospitals for the French army, and when the Russians arrived, they found these hospitals wholly deserted by the medical men. The sick (many of them labouring under infectious fevers), and the wounded, were huddled together, without provisions, attendants, or the slightest regard to their situation. The first step of the Russian officers, who were entrusted with the care of these hospitals, was to employ a number of Jews to clear out the corpses, some of which had lain there for three weeks; and when these were collected and burnt, their number was found to exceed 16,000; the sick were then separated from the wounded; and as soon as order was re-established, the Emperor of Russia visited the hospitals himself, to be assured that every possible attention was paid to their surviving inmates.

During the whole of the winter of 1812 and the year 1813, a typhus fever was very prevalent in the French army, and in many places, particularly in the fortresses on the Elbe; and in Frankfort and Mentz, it made dreadful ravages; but it never extended, to any considerable degree, among the Russians. This was partly owing, no doubt, to the influence of exciting passions on the constitutions of the men, but much must certainly be ascribed to the admirable arrangements of the Russian hospital staff, which, under the superintendance of our countryman, Sir James Wyllie, have attained, in a few years, a surprising degree of excellence. The state of the Rus-

sian hospitals at Paris, under the direction of another countryman, Dr Crichton, was universally admired.

The Russian imperial guard is, we believe, the finest body of men in Europe; the whole number, when the regiments are all complete, is about 30,000; but the effective men at Paris did not exceed 20,000. These are made up from time to time, by picked men from the whole army. The charge of one of the regiments of cuirassiers, 1000 strong, upon the Champ de Mars, was one of the finest sights imaginable. The clattering of the horses feet on the hard ground, and the rattling of the armour, increasing as they advanced, exceeded the sound of the loudest thunder.

Their horses are not so heavy as those of the English dragoons, but they have evidently more blood in them, and their power of bearing fatigues and privations is quite wonderful. We were told by the officer commanding one of these regiments, that almost all the horses that we saw at Paris, in the finest possible condition, were on the Niemen when the French crossed it in 1812, and had borne the fatigues of the retreat to Moscow, and of the advance during the dreadful winter which had proved so fatal to the French army; as well as of the winter campaign of 1814, in France, which was carried on, almost entirely, during frost and snow. The Russian soldiers bore the extreme cold of the former winter in a manner hardly less wonder-

ful; we were assured that they were not more warmly clothed than the French; but they were accustomed to the climate, were comparatively well fed, and were animated by victory, while their antagonists were depressed by famine and despair.

The equipment of the artillery of the guard is probably the completest in the world;—each gun of the horse artillery is followed by three tumbrils of ammunition, and the artillerymen being all mounted and armed, a battery of horse-artillery is fitted to act in a double capacity. One of these batteries, of 12 pieces, on the march, with all its accompaniments, takes up nearly half-a-mile of road.

The regiments of infantry are of various strength; all are composed of the finest men, in point of strength and military appearance, but they appeared to us rather inadequately officered. Of the physical powers of this body of men, no better proof can be given, than their having marched, within 24 hours, on the 22d and 23d of March, a distance of 18 leagues, or 54 miles, which they did at two marches, resting three hours, without any straggling. The occasion when they most highly distinguished themselves was at Culm, where four regiments of them (about 8000 men) stopped, for two days, in the defiles of the Riesen Gebirge, the whole corps of Vandamme. The regiment Pavloffsky, who were made guards for their conduct at Borodino, attracted particular attention; they wear caps faced with brass, whence the French soldiers, who know them well,

call them the Bonnets d'Or; and many of them preserve with much care the marks of the bullets by which these have been pierced.

The Russian soldiers, at least of the guard, have almost universally dark complexions, their features are generally low, and their faces broad. The officers and soldiers of the Prussian guard, which is about 8000 strong, and in an equally high state of discipline and equipment, are, on the whole, handsomer men, having generally fair hair, blue eyes, high features, and ruddy complexions.

A great number of the Prussian officers have a fine expression of romantic enterprise in their countenances; and it is well known that the whole Prussian nation, long oppressed by the presence of French armies, entered into the war with France with a spirit of energy and union that never was surpassed. The formation of the legion of revenge,—the desertion of all seminaries of education, by teachers as well as pupils,—the substitution of ornaments in iron, for gold and jewellery, by the ladies of Berlin and other towns, are striking instances of this popular feeling. The war-song, composed by a young student from Konigsberg, which was sung in the heat of battle by the regiment of volunteer hussars to which he belonged, and the author of which was basely slain by a French prisoner whom he had neglected to disarm,—to judge of it by a version which appeared in the newspapers, and by the enthusiasm with which the Prussians speak of it, is worthy of being translated by one of our noblest poets.

All the nations of Germany have strong feelings of patriotism associated with the sight, and even with the name of the Rhine. When the Austrians, in one of the last actions of the campaign of 1813, carried the heights of Hockheim, in the neighbourhood of Mentz, and first came in sight of that river, they involuntarily halted, and stood for some minutes in silence; when the Prince Marshal coming up to know the cause of the delay, their feelings burst forth in peals of enthusiastic acclamation, as they again advanced to the charge. The Prussian corps of the army of Silesia, destined to force the passage of the river, assembled on the right bank on the evening of the 31st of December 1813, determined to begin the year with the conquest to which they aspired; and just at midnight the first boats pulled off from the shore, the oars keeping time to thousands of voices, who sung words adapted to a favourite national air by the celebrated Schlegel, the beginning of which is, literally translated: "The Rhine shall no longer be our boundary,—it is the great artery of Germany, and it shall flow through the heart of our empire."

The Austrians whom we saw at Paris, were in general strong heavy looking men. Their cavalry were universally admired; but the Russians and Prussians complained much of the general dilatoriness of their movements, and in particular, of the quantity of baggage waggons with which their march was encumbered. Upon one occasion, some hundreds of these fell into the hands of the French, to the

great amusement of the Russians. The Bavarians and Wirtembergers had the character, both in Russia and France, of fighting very hard, and plundering freely. This last accomplishment, as well as their military arrangements, they had learnt from the French; and their conduct in this respect in France itself, might be said to be actuated by a kind of poetical justice.

We were highly gratified by the review of the whole Russian and Prussian guard which we saw in the Bois de Boulogne and road to St Germain, on the 30th of May. They were drawn up in a single line, extending about six miles. The allied Sovereigns, followed by the Princes of Russia, Prussia and France, the French Marshals, and all the leading officers of the allied armies, rode at full speed along the line; and the loud huzzas of the soldiers, which died away among the long avenues of elm trees, as the cloud of dust which enveloped them receded from the view, were inexpressibly sublime.

The appearance of these troops on parade was such, that but for the traces which long exposure to all changes of weather had left on their faces, it never could have been supposed that they had been engaged in long marches. They had always marched and fought in their great coats and small blue caps, carrying their uniforms in their knapsacks. On the night before they entered Paris, however, they put them on, and marched in therefore in as fine parade order as that in which they had left Petersburg.

The Parisians, who had been told that the allied armies were nearly annihilated, and only a wreck left, expressed their astonishment with their usual levity: "Au moins," said they, "Ce'st un beau debris."

While the uniforms, arms and accoutrements of these troops were in the highest order, they seemed to take a pride in displaying the worn and faded standards, torn by winds and pierced with bullets, under which they had served during the whole campaigns. Their services might also be judged of from the medals of the year 1812, which almost all the Russians bore, and to which all without distinction of rank are entitled, who were exposed to the enemy's fire during that campaign; and from the insignia of various orders, which in both the services extend to privates as well as officers. The effect of these honorary rewards on the minds of the men is certainly very great; and it is perhaps to be regretted that there is no institution of the same kind in the British service. The spirit of our soldiers, as all the world knows, needs no such stimulus; but if a measure of this kind could in any degree gratify their military feelings, surely their country owes them the gratification; and what can be more pleasing to a soldier than to see his officers and his Sovereign proud to display honours which he shares along with them? The Russians appear to prize these medals and decorations most highly. Almost every wounded soldier wears them even when lying in hospital, and seems as careful of them as of the

small crucifix which he brought with him from his home; and which, with a superstition that accords better with the true military spirit than the thoughtless infidelity of the French, he carries in his bosom through all the chances of war.

CHAPTER III.

PARIS—ITS PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

With whatever sentiments a stranger may enter Paris, his feelings must be the same with regard to the monuments of ancient magnificence, or of modern taste, which it contains. All that the vanity or patriotism of a long series of Sovereigns could effect for the embellishment of the capital in which they resided; all that the conquests of an ambitious and unprincipled Army could accumulate from the spoils of the nations whom they had subdued, are there presented to the eye of the stranger with a profusion which obliterates every former prejudice, and stifles the feelings of national emulation in exultation at the greatness of human genius.

The ordinary buildings of Paris, as every traveller has observed, and as all the world knows, are in general mean and uncomfortable. The height and gloomy aspect of the houses; the narrowness of the streets, and the want of pavement for foot passengers, convey an idea of antiquity, which ill accords with what the imagination had anticipated of the modern capital of the French empire. This circumstance renders the admiration of the spectator greater when he first comes in sight of its *public edifices;* when he is conducted to the Place Louis Quinze or the Pont Neuf, from whence he has a general view of the principal buildings of this celebrated capital. With the single exception of the view of London from the terrace of the Adelphi, there is no point in our own country where the effect of architectural design is so great as in the situations which have now been mentioned. The view from the former of these, combines many of the most striking objects which Paris has to present. To the east, the long front of the Thuilleries rises over the dark mass of foliage which cover its gardens; to the south, the picturesque aspect of the town is broken by the varied objects which the river presents, and the fine perspective of the Bridge of Peace, terminating in the noble front of the palace of the Legislative Body; to the west, the long avenues of the Elysian Fields are closed by the pillars of a triumphal arch which Napoleon had commenced; while to the north, the beautiful façade of the Place itself leaves the spectator only room to discover at a greater distance the

foundation of the Temple of Glory, which he had commenced, and in the execution of which he was interrupted by those ambitious enterprises to which his subsequent downfall was owing. To a painter's eye, the effect of the whole scene is increased by the rich and varied fore-ground which everywhere presents itself, composed of the shrubs with which the skirts of the square are adorned, and the lofty poplars which rise amidst the splendour of architectural beauty: while recent events give a greater interest to the spot from which this beauty is surveyed, by the remembrance, that it was here that Louis XVI. fell a martyr to the revolutionary principles, and that it was here that the Emperor Alexander and the other Princes of Europe took their station when their armies passed in triumph through the walls of Paris.

The view from the Pont Neuf, though not striking upon the whole, embraces objects of greater individual beauty. The gay and animated quays of the city covered with foot-passengers, and, with all the varied exhibitions of industrious occupation, which, from the warmness of the climate, are carried on in the open air;—the long and splendid front of the Louvre, and the Thuilleries;—the bold projections of the Palais du Arts, of the Hotel de la Monnaie, and other public buildings on the opposite side of the river;—the beautiful perspective of the bridges, adorned by the magnificent colonnade which fronts the Palace of the Legislative Body;—and the lofty picturesque buildings of the centre of Paris sur-

rounding the more elevated towers of Notre Dame, form a scene, which, though less perfect, is more striking, and more characteristic than the scene from the centre of the Place Lewis Quinze, which has been just described. It conveys at once a general idea of the French capital; of that mixture of poverty and splendour by which it is so remarkably distinguished; of that grandeur of national power, and that degradation of individual importance which marked the ancient dynasty of the French nation. It marks too, in a historical view, the changes of public feeling which the people of this country have undergone, from the distant period when the towers of Notre Dame rose amidst the austerity of Gothic taste, and were loaded with the riches of Catholic susperstition, to that boasted æra, when the loyalty of the French people exhausted the wealth and the genius of the country, to decorate with classic taste the residence of their Sovereigns; and lastly, to those later days, when the names of religion and of loyalty have alike been forgotten; when the national exultation reposed only on the trophies of military greatness, and the iron yoke of imperial power was forgotten in the monuments which record the deeds of imperial glory.

To the general observation on the inferiority of the common buildings in Paris there are some remarkable exceptions. The Boulevards, which are the remains of the ancient ramparts which surrounded the city at a former period, are, in general, beautiful, both from the circular form in which they are

built, which prevents the view from being ever too extensive for the objects which it contains, and presents them in the most picturesque aspect; from the breadth which they every where preserve, and which affords room for the spectator to observe the magnificence of the detached palaces with which they abound; and from the rows of trees with which they are shaded, and which combine singularly well with the irregular character of the building which they generally present. In the skirts of the town, and more especially in the Fauxbourg St Germain, the beauty of the streets is greatly increased by the detached hotels or villas, surrounded by gardens, which are everywhere to be met with, in which the lilac, the laburnum, the Bois de Judeé, and the acacia, grow in the most luxuriant manner, and on the green foliage of which, the eye reposes with singular delight, amidst the bright and dazzling whiteness of the stone with which they are surrounded.

The Hotel des Invalids, the Chelsea Hospital of France, is one of the objects on which the Parisians principally pride themselves, and to which a stranger is conducted immediately after his arrival in that capital. The institution itself appears to be well conducted, and to give general satisfaction to the wounded men, who have there found an asylum from the miseries of war. We were informed that these men live in habits of perfect harmony among each other; a state of things widely different from that of our veterans in Greenwich Hospital, and which is probably chiefly owing to the cheerfulness and

equanimity of temper which form the best feature in the French character. There is something in the style of the architecture of this building, which accords well with the object to which it is devoted. The front is distinguished by a simple manly portico, and a dome of the finest proportion rises above its centre, which is visible from all parts of the city. This dome was gilded by order of Bonaparte: and however much a fastidious taste may regret the addition, it certainly gave an air of splendour to the whole, which was in perfect unison with the feelings of exultation which the sight of this monument of military glory was then fitted to awaken among the French people. The exterior of this edifice was formerly surrounded by cannon captured by the armies of France at different periods: and ten thousand standards, the trophies of victory during the wars of two centuries, waved under its splendid dome, and enveloped the sword of Frederick the Great, which hung from the centre, until the 31st of March 1814, when, as already observed, they were all burnt by order of Maria Louisa, to prevent their falling into the victorious hands of the allied Powers.

If the character of the architecture of the Hotel des Invalides accords well with the object to which that building is destined; the character of the Louvre is not less in unison with the spirit of the fine arts, to which it is consecrated. It is impossible for language to convey any adequate idea of the impression which this exquisite building awakens in the mind of a stranger. The beautiful proportions,

and the fine symmetry of the great façade, give an air of simplicity to the distant view of this edifice, which is not diminished, on nearer approach, by the unrivalled beauty of its ornaments and detail; but when you cross the threshold of the portico, and pass under its noble archway into the inner-court, all considerations are absorbed in the throb of admiration, which is excited by the sudden display of all that is lovely and harmonious in Grecian architecture. You find yourself in the midst of the noblest and yet chastest display of architectural beauty, where every ornament possesses the character by which the whole is distinguished, and where the whole possesses the grace and elegance which every ornament presents:—You find yourself on the spot, where all the monuments of ancient art are deposited—where the greatest exertions of mortal genius are preserved—and where a palace has at last been raised worthy of being the depository of the collected genius of the human race.—It bears a higher character than that of being the residence of imperial power; it seems destined to loftier purposes than to be the abode of earthly greatness; and the only forms by which its halls would not be degraded, are those models of ideal perfection which the genius of ancient Greece created to exalt the character of a heathen world.

Placed in a more elevated spot, and destined to a still higher object, the Pantheon bears in its front the traces of the noble purpose for which it was intended.—It was intended to be the cemetery of all the

great men who had deserved well of their country; and it bears the inscription, above its entrance, *Aux grands Ames La Patrie reconnoissante.* The character of its architecture is well adapted to the impression it is intended to convey, and suits the simplicity of the inscription which its portico presents. Its situation has been selected with singular taste, to aid the effect which was thus intended. It is placed at the top of an eminence, which shelves in a declivity on every side; and the immediate approach is by an immense flight of steps, which form the base of the building, and increase the effect which its magnitude produces. Over the entrance is placed a portico of lofty pillars, finely proportioned, supporting a magnificent entablature of the simplest order; and the whole terminates in a dome of vast dimensions, forming the highest object in the whole city. The impression which every one must feel in crossing its threshold, is that of religious awe; the individual is lost in the greatness of the objects with which he is surrounded, and he dreads to enter what seems the abode of a greater Power, and to have been framed for the purposes of more elevated worship. The Louvre might have been fitted for the gay scenes of ancient sacrifice; it suits the brilliant conceptions of heathen mythology; and seems the fit abode of those ideal forms, in which the imagination of ancient times embodied their conceptions of divine perfection; but the Pantheon is adapted for a holier worship, and accords with the character of a purer belief; and the vastness and

solitude of its untrodden chambers, awaken those feelings of human weakness, and that sentiment of human immortality which befit the temple of a spiritual faith.

We were involuntarily led, by the sight of this great monument of sacred architecture in the Grecian style, to compare it with the Gothic churches which we had seen, and in particular, with the Cathedral of Beauvais, the interior of which is finished with greater delicacy, and in finer proportions, than any other edifice of a similar kind in France. The impression which the inimitable choir of Beauvais produced, was widely different from that which we felt on entering the lofty dome of the Pantheon at Paris. The light pinnacles, the fretted roof, the aspiring form of the Gothic edifice, seemed to have been framed by the hands of aerial beings; and produced, even from a distance, that impression of grace and airiness which it was the peculiar object of this species of Gothic architecture to excite. On passing the high archway which covers the western door, and entering the immense aisles of the Cathedral, the sanctity of the place produces a deeper impression, and the grandeur of the forms awakens profounder feelings. The light of day is excluded, the rays of the sun come mellowed through the splendid colours with which the windows are stained, and cast a religious light over the marble pavement which covers the floor; while the eye reposes on the harmonious forms of the lancet windows, or is bewildered in the profusion of ornament with which

the roof is adorned, or is lost in the deep perspective of its aisles. The impression which the whole produces, is that of religious emotion, singularly suited to the genius of Christianity ; it is seen in that obscure light which fits the solemnity of religious duty, and awakens those feelings of intense delight, which prepare the mind for the high strain of religious praise. But it is not the deep feeling of humility and weakness which is produced by the dark chambers and massy pillars of the Pantheon at Paris; it is not in the mausoleum of the dead that you seem to wander, nor on the thoughts of the great that have gone before you, that the mind revolves; it is in the scene of thanksgiving that your admiration is fixed; it is with the emblems of Hope that your devotion is awakened, and with the enthusiasm of gratitude that the mind is filled. Beneath the gloomy roof of the Grecian Temple, the spirit is concentrated within itself: it seeks the repose which solitude affords, and meditates on the fate of the immortal soul; but it loves to follow the multitude into the Gothic Cathedral, to join in the song of grateful praise which peals through its lengthened aisles, and to share in the enthusiasm which belongs to the exercise of common devotion.

The Cathedral of Notre Dame is the only Gothic building of note in Paris, and it is by no means equal to the expectations we had been led to form of it. The style of its architecture is not that of the finest Gothic; it has neither the exquisite lightness of or-

nament which distinguish the summit of Gloucester Cathedral, nor the fine lancet windows which give so unrivalled a beauty to the interior of Beauvais, nor the richness of roof which covers the tombs of Westminster Abbey. Its character is that of massy greatness; its ornaments are rich rather than elegant, and its interior striking more from its immense size than the beauty of the proportion in which it is formed. In spite of all these circumstances, however, the Cathedral of Notre Dame produces a deep impression on the mind of the beholder: its towers rise to a stupendous height above all the buildings which surround them; while the stone of every other edifice is of a light colour, they alone are black with the smoke of centuries; and exhibit a venerable aspect of ancient greatness in the midst of the brilliancy of modern decoration with which the city is filled. Even the crowd of ornaments with which they are loaded, and the heavy proportion in which they are built, are forgotten in the effect which their magnitude produces; they suit the gloomy character of the building they adorn, and accord with the expression of antiquated power by which its aged forms are now distinguished.

To those who have been accustomed to the form of worship which is established in Protestant countries, there is nothing so striking in the Catholic churches as the complete oblivion of rank, or any of the distinctions of established society which there universally prevails. There are no divisions of seats, nor any places fixed for any particular classes of so-

ciety. All, of whatever rank or station, kneel alike upon the marble pavement; and the whole extent of the church is open for the devotion of all classes of the people. You frequently see the poorest citizens with their children kneeling on the stone close to those of the highest rank, or the most extensive fortunes. This custom may appear painful to those who have been habituated to the forms of devotion in the English churches; but it produces an impression on the mind of the spectator which nothing in our service is capable of effecting. To see the individual form lost in the immensity of the objects with which he is surrounded; to see all ranks and ages blended in the exercise of common devotion; to see all distinction forgotten in the sense of common infirmity, suits the spirit of that religion which was addressed to the poor as well as to the rich, and fits the presence of that Being before whom all ranks are equal.

Nor is it without a good effect upon the feelings of mankind, that this custom has formed a part of the Catholic service. Amidst that degradation of the great body of the people, which marks the greater part of the Catholic countries—amidst the insolence of aristocratic power, which the doctrines of the Catholic faith are so well suited to support, it is fitting that there should be some occasions on which the distinctions of the world should be forgotten; some moments in which the rich as well as the poor should be humbled before a greater power—in which they should be reminded of the common

faith in which they have been baptized, of the common duties to which they are called, and the common hopes which they have been permitted to form.

We had the good fortune to see high mass performed in Notre Dame, with all the pomp of the Catholic service, for the souls of Louis XVI. Marie Antoinette and the Dauphin, on May 9, 1814, soon after the King's arrival in Paris. The Cathedral was hung with black in every part; the brilliancy of day wholly excluded, and it was lighted only by double rows of wax tapers, which burned round the coffins, placed in the centre of the choir. It was crowded to excess in every part; all the Marshals, Peers and dignitaries of France were stationed with the Royal Family near the centre of the Cathedral, and all the principal officers of the allied armies attended at the celebration of the service. The King was present, though, without being perceived by the vast assembly by whom he was surrounded; and the Dutchess d'Angouleme exhibited, in this melancholy duty, that mixture of firmness and sensibility by which her character has always been distinguished.

It was said, that there were several persons present at this solemn service who had voted for the death of the King; and many of those assembled must doubtless have been conscious, that they had been instrumental in the death of those for whose souls this solemn service was now performing. The greater part, however, of those whom we had an opportunity of observing, exhibited the symptoms

of genuine sorrow, and seemed to participate in the solemnity with unfeigned devotion. The Catholic worship was here displayed in its utmost splendour; all the highest prelates of France were assembled to give dignity to the spectacle; and all that art could devise was exhausted to render the scene impressive in the eyes of the people. To us, however, who had been habituated to the simplicity of the English form, the variety of unmeaning ceremony, the endless gestures and unceasing bows of the clergy who officiated, destroyed the impression which the solemnity of the service would otherwise have produced. But though the service itself appeared ridiculous, the effect of the whole scene was sublime in the greatest degree. The black tapestry hung in heavy folds round the sides of the Cathedral, and magnified the impression which its vastness produced. The tapers which surrounded the coffins threw a red and gloomy light over the innumerable multitude which thronged the floor; their receding rays faintly illuminated the farther recesses, or strained to pierce the obscure gloom in which the summits of the pillars were lost; while the sacred music pealed through the distant aisles, and deepened the effect of the thousands of voices which joined in the strains of repentant prayer.

Among the exhibitions of art to which a stranger is conducted immediately after his arrival in the French metropolis, there is none which is more characteristic of the disposition of the people than the *Musee des Monumens Francois*, situated in the Rue

des Petits Augustins. This is a collection of all the finest sepulchral monuments from differents parts of France, particularly from the Cathedral of St Denis, where the cemetery of the royal family had, from time immemorial, been placed. It is said by the French, that the collection of these monuments into one museum was the only means of preserving them from the fury of the people during the revolution; and certainly nothing but absolute necessity could have justified the barbarous idea of bringing them from the graves they were intended to adorn, to one spot, where all associations connected with them are destroyed. It is not the mere survey of the monuments of the dead that is interesting,—not the examination of the specimens of art by which they may be adorned;—it is the remembrance of the deeds which they are intended to record,—of the virtues they are destined to perpetuate,—of the pious gratitude of which they are now the only testimony—above all, of the dust they actually cover. They remind us of the great men who formerly filled the theatre of the world,—they carry us back to an age which, by a very natural illusion, we conceive to have been both wiser and happier than our own, and present the record of human greatness in that pleasing distance when the great features of character alone are remembered, when time has drawn its veil over the weaknesses of mortality, and its virtues are sanctified by the hand of death. It is a feeling fitted to elevate the soul; to mingle the thoughts of death with the recollection of the vir-

tues by which life had been dignified, and renovate in every heart those high hopes of religion which spring from the grave of former virtue.

All this delightful, this purifying illusion, is destroyed by the way in which the monuments are collected in the museum at Paris. They are there brought together from all parts in France; severed from the ashes of the dead they were intended to cover; and arranged in systematic order to illustrate the history of the art whose progress they unfold. The tombs of all the Kings of France, of all the Generals by whom its glory has been extended, of the statesmen by whom its power, and the writers by whom its fame has been established, are crowded together in one collection, and heaped upon each other, without any other connexion than that of the time in which they were originally raised. The Museum accordingly exhibits, in the most striking manner, the power of arrangement and classification which the French possess; it is valuable, as containing fine models of the greatest men which France has produced, and exhibits a curious specimen of the progress of art, from its first commencement, to the period of its greatest perfection; but it has wholly lost that deep and peculiar interest which belongs to the monuments of the dead in their original situation.

Adjoining to the museum, is a garden planted with trees, in which many of the finest monuments are placed; but in which the depravity of the French taste appears in the most striking manner. It is

surrounded with high houses, and darkened by the shade of lofty buildings; yet, in this gloomy situation, they have placed the tomb of Fenelon, and the united monument of Abelard and Eloise: profaning thus, by the barbarous affectation of artificial taste, and the still more shocking imitation of ancient superstition, the remains of those whose names are enshrined in every heart which can feel the beauty of moral excellence, or share in the sympathy with youthful sorrow.

How different are the feelings with which an Englishman surveys the untouched monuments of English greatness!—and treads the floor of that venerable building which shrouds the remains of all who have dignified their native land—in which her patriots, her poets, and her philosophers "sleep with her kings, and dignify the scene," which the rage of popular fury has never dared to profane, and the hand of victorious power has never been able to violate; where the ashes of the immortal dead still lie in undisturbed repose, under that splendid roof which covered the tombs of its earliest kings, and witnessed, from its first dawn, the infant glory of the English people.—Nor could the remembrance of the national monuments we have described, ever excite in the mind of a native of France, the same feeling of heroic devotion which inspired the sublime expression of Nelson, as he boarded the Spanish Admiral's ship at St Vincent's—"Westminster Abbey or Victory!"

Though the streets in Paris have an aged and uncomfortable appearance, the form of the houses is such, as, at a distance, to present a picturesque aspect. Their height, their sharp and irregular tops, the vast variety of forms which they assume when seen from different quarters, all combine to render a distant view of them more striking than the long rows of uniform houses of which London is composed. The domes and steeples of Paris, however, are greatly inferior, both in number and magnificence, to those of the English capital.

The gardens of the Thuilleries and the Luxembourg, of which the Parisians think so highly, and which are constantly filled with all ranks of citizens, are laid out with a singularity of taste, of which, in this country, we can scarcely form any conception. The straight walks—the clipt trees—the marble fountains are fast wearing out in all parts of England; they are to be met with only round the mansions of ancient families, and, even there are kept rather from the influence of ancient prejudice, or from the affection to hereditary forms than from their coincidence with the present taste of the English people. They are seldom, accordingly, disagreeable, with us, to the eye of the most cultivated taste; their singularity forms a pleasing variety to the continued succession of lawns and shrubberies which are every where to be met with; and they are regarded rather as the venerable marks of ancient splendour, than as the barbarous affectation of modern

distinction. In France, the native deformity of this taste appears in its real light, without the colouring of any such adventitious circumstances as conceal it in this country. It does not appear there under the softening veil of ancient manners; its avenues do not conduct to the decaying abode of hereditary greatness—its gardens do not mark the scenes of former festivity—its fountains are not covered with the moss which has grown for centuries. It appears as the model of present taste; it is considered as the indication of existing splendour; and sought after, as the form in which the beauty of Nature is now to be admired. All that association accordingly had blended in our minds with the style of ancient gardening in our own country, was instantly divested by its appearance in France; and we felt then the whole importance of that happy change in the national taste, whereby variety has been made to succeed to uniformity, and the imitation of nature to come in the place of the exhibition of art.

In every country, and in every department of taste, the first object of art is, the display of the power of the artist; and it is in the last period of its improvements alone, that this miserable propensity is overcome. It is hence that the imitation of nature is not what is at first attempted; that the forms which she presents are uniformly neglected, and the merit of the artist is thought to consist in such artificial designs as bear the most unequivocal marks of his individual dexterity. The forms of nature are every-

where to be met with—they are open to the most vulgar capacity; the power of art, therefore, it is at first thought, must be shown in the complete subjugation of natural form, or the complete abandonment of natural beauty. It is hence that florists uniformly take delight in double flowers and monsters, which are the farthest removed from the forms of nature; and it is hence that gardeners always evince so great an anxiety to conduct strangers to the most ridiculous contortion of natural form, which their domains can exhibit. There is nothing unnatural or vulgar in this propensity; it pervades all branches of taste at a certain stage of its progress, and all ranks of society, to whom a limited capacity of mind is granted. It is hence that every society exhibits examples of individuals, who aim at singularity of manners, merely that they may be different from the generality of mankind: it is hence that many persons, even of a cultivated mind, shut their eye to the charms of beauty in every department of taste, merely that they may display their own wretched vanity in criticising its imperfections: it is hence that painters select the moment of passion or exertion, for no other reason than for the display of their anatomical knowledge, or their skill in the delineation of extraordinary emotion; and that poets have so often neglected what is really pathetic in the scenes, either of nature or of man, to present the artificial conceptions of their learning or fancy. In all these instances, the degradation of taste arises from the vain anxiety of men to display the power of the

artist, and their utter forgetfulness of the end of the Art.

The remarkable characteristic of the taste of France is, that this love of artificial beauty continues with undiminished force, at a period when, in other nations, it has given place to a more genuine love for the beauty of nature. In them, the natural progress of refinement has led from the admiration of the art of imitation to the love of the subjects imitated. In France, this early prejudice continues in its pristine vigour at the present moment: They never lose sight of the effort of the artist; their admiration is fixed not on the quality or object in nature, but on the artificial representation of it; not on the thing signified, but the sign. It is hence that they have such exalted ideas of the perfection of their artist David, whose paintings are nothing more than a representation of the human figure in its most extravagant and phrenzied attitudes; that they are insensible to the simple display of real emotion, but dwell with delight upon the vehement representation of it which their stage exhibits; and that, leaving the charming heights of Belleville, or the sequestered banks of the Seine almost wholly deserted, they crowd to the stiff alleys of the Elysian Fields, or the artificial beauties of the gardens of Versailles.

In the midst of Paris this artificial style of gardening is not altogether unpleasing; it is in unison, in some measure, with the regular character of the buildings with which it is surrounded; and the profusion

of statues and marble vases continues the impression which the character of their palaces is fitted to produce. But at Versailles, at St Cloud, and Fontainbleau, amidst the luxuriance of vegetation, and surrounded by the majesty of forest scenery, it destroys altogether the effect which arises from the irregularity of natural beauty. Every one feels straight borders, and square porticoes and broad alleys, to be in unison with the immediate neighbourhood of an antiquated mansion; but they become painful when extended to those remoter parts of the grounds, when the character of the scene is determined by the rudeness of uncultivated nature.

There are some occasions, nevertheless, on which the gardens of the Thuilleries present a beautiful spectacle, in spite of the artificial taste in which they are formed. From the warmth of the climate, the Parisians, of all classes, live much in the open air, and frequent the public gardens in great numbers during the continuance of the fine weather. In the evening especially, they are filled with citizens, who repose themselves under the shade of the lofty trees, after the heat and the fatigues of the day; and they there present a spectacle of more than ordinary interest and beauty. The disposition of the French suits the character of the scene, and harmonises with the impression which the stillness of the evening produces on the mind. There is none of that rioting or confusion by which an assembly of the middling classes in England is too often disgraced; no quarrelling or intoxication even among the poorest

ranks, nor any appearance of that degrading want which destroys the pleasing idea of public happiness. The people appear all to enjoy a certain share of individual prosperity; their intercourse is conducted with unbroken harmony, and they seem to resign themselves to those delightful feelings which steal over the mind during the stillness and serenity of a summer evening. It would seem as if all the angry passions of the breast were soothed by the voice of reposing nature—as if the sounds of labour were stilled, lest they should break the harmony of the scene—as if vice itself had concealed its deformity from the overpowering influence of natural beauty. The scenery itself assumes a finer character: the artificial taste in which the gardens are formed, is concealed by the obscure gloom which twilight produces; the rich and varied outline of the trees is clearly defined on the fading colours of the western sky; while the spires of the city appear reflected in deep shadow on the surface of the river, whose unruffled waters still bear the lingering light of the departing day.

Still more beautiful, perhaps, is the appearance of this scene during the stillness of the night, when the moon throws her dubious rays over the objects of nature. The gardens of the Thuilleries remain crowded with people, who seem to enjoy the repose which universally prevails, and from whom no sound is to be heard which can break the stillness or the serenity of the scene. The regularity of the forms is wholly lost in the masses of light and shadow that are there displayed; the foliage throws a che-

quered shade over the ground beneath, while the distant vistas of the Elysian Fields are seen in that soft and mellow light by which the radiance of the moon is so peculiarly distinguished. After passing through the scenes of gaiety and festivity which mark these favourite scenes of the French people, we frequently came to small encampments of the allied troops in the remote parts of the grounds. The appearance of these bivouacks, composed of Cossack squadrons, Hungarian hussars, and Prussian artillery, in the obscurity of moonlight, and surrounded by the gloom of forest scenery, was beyond measure striking. The picturesque forms of the soldiers, sleeping on their arms under the shade of the trees, or half hid by the rude huts which they had erected for their shelter; the varied attitudes of the horses standing amidst the waggons by which the camp was followed, or sleeping beside the veterans whom they had borne through all the fortunes of war; the dark masses of the artillery, dimly discerned in the shades of night, or faintly reflecting the pale light of the moon, presented a scene of the most beautiful description, in which the rude features of war were softened by the tranquillity of peaceful life: and the interest of present repose was enhanced by the remembrance of the wintry storms and bloody fields through which these brave men had passed, during the memorable campaigns in which they had been engaged. The effect of the whole was increased by the perfect stillness which everywhere prevailed, broken only

at intervals by the slow step of the sentinel, as he paced his rounds, or the sweeter sounds of those beautiful airs, which, in a far distant country, recalled to the Russian soldier the joys and the happiness of his native land.

CHAPTER IV.

ENVIRONS OF PARIS.

St Cloud was the favourite residence of Bonaparte, and from this circumstance, possesses an interest which does not belong to the other imperial palaces. It stands high, upon a lofty bank overhanging the Seine, which takes a bold sweep in the plain below; and the steep declivity which descends to its banks, is clothed with magnificent woods of aged elms. The character of the scenery is bold and rugged;—the trees are of the wildest forms, and the most stupendous height, and the banks, for the most part, steep and irregular. It is here, accordingly, that the French gardening appears in all its genuine deformity; and that its straight walks and endless fountains display a degree of formality and art, destruc-

tive to the peculiar beauty by which the scene is distinguished. These gardens, however, were the favourite and private walks of the Emperor;—it was there that he meditated those schemes of ambition which were destined to shake the established thrones of Europe;—it was under the shade of its luxuriant foliage that he formed the plan of all the mighty projects which he had in contemplation;—it was in the splendid apartments of its palace that the Councils of France assembled, to revolve on the means of permanently destroying the English power:—It was here too, by a most remarkable coincidence, that his destruction was finally accomplished;—that the last convention was concluded, by which his second dethronement was completed;—and that the victorious arms of England dictated the terms of surrender to his conquered capital.

When we visited St Cloud, it was the head-quarters of Prince Schwartzenberg; and the Austrian grenadiers mounted guard at the gates of the Imperial Palace. The banks of the Seine, below the Palace, were covered by an immense bivouack of Austrian troops, and the fires of their encampment twinkled in the obscurity of twilight amidst the low brushwood with which the sides of the river were clothed. The appearance of this bivouack, dimly discerned through the rugged stems of lofty trees, or half-hid by the luxuriant branches which obscured the view;—the picturesque and varied aspect of the camp covered with waggons, and all the accompaniments of military service;—the columns of smoke

rising from the fires with which it was interspersed, and the innumerable horses crowded amidst the confused multitude of men and carriages, or resting in more sequestered spots on the sides of the river, with their forms finely reflected in its unruffled waters—presented a spectacle which exhibited war in its most striking aspect, and gave a character to the scene which would have suited the romantic strain of Salvator's mind.

St Germain, though less picturesquely situated than St Cloud, presents features, nevertheless, of more than ordinary magnificence. The Palace, now converted into a school of military education by Napoleon, is a mean irregular building; though it possesses a certain interest, by having been long the residence of the exiled house of Stewart. The situation, however, is truly fitted for an imperial dwelling; it stands on the edge of a high bank, overhanging the Seine, at the end of a magnificent terrace, a mile and a half long, built on the projecting heights which edge the river. The walk along this terrace is the finest spectacle which the vicinity of Paris has to present. It is backed along its whole extent by the immense forest of St Germain, the foliage of which overhangs the road, and in the recesses of which you can occasionally discern those beautiful peeps which form the peculiar characteristic of forest scenery. The steep bank which descends to the river is clothed with orchards and vineyards in all the luxuriance of a southern climate; and in front, there is spread beneath your feet the immense plain

in which the Seine wanders, whose waters are descried at intervals through the woods and gardens with which its banks are adorned; while, in the farthest distance, the towers of St Denis, and the heights of Paris, form an irregular outline on the verge of the horizon. It is a scene exhibiting the most beautiful aspect of cultivated nature, and would have been the fit residence for a Monarch who loved to survey his subjects' happiness: but it was deserted by the miserable weakness of Louis XIV., because the view terminated in the cemetery of the Kings of France, and his enjoyment of it would have been destroyed by the thoughts of mortal decay.

Versailles, which that monarch chose as the ordinary abode of his splendid Court, is less favourably situate for a royal dwelling, though the view from the great front of the palace is beautifully clothed with luxuriant woods. The palace itself is a magnificent building of immense extent, loaded with the riches of architectural beauty, but destitute of that fine proportion and lightness of ornament, which spread so indescribable a charm over the Palace of the Louvre. The interior is in a state of lamentable decay, having been pillaged at the commencement of the revolutionary fury, and formed into a barrack for the republican soldiers, the marks of whose violence are still visible in the faded splendour of its magnificent apartments. They still shew, however, the favourite apartments of Maria Antoinette, the walls of which are covered with the finest mirrors, and some remains of the furniture are still pre-

served, which even the licentious fury of the French army seems to have been afraid to violate. The gardens, on which all the riches of France, and all the efforts of art were so long lavished, present a painful monument of the depravity of taste: but the *Petit Trianon*, which is a little palace built of marble, and surrounded by shrubberies in the English style, exhibits the genuine beauty of which the imitation of nature is susceptible. This palace contains a suite of splendid apartments, fitted up with singular taste, and adorned with a number of charming pictures; it was the favourite residence of Maria Louisa, and we were there shewn the drawing materials which she used, and some unfinished sketches which she left, in which, we were informed, she much delighted, and which bore the marks of a cultivated taste.

We frequently enquired concerning the character and occupations of this Empress, at all the palaces where she usually dwelt, and uniformly received the same answer:—She was everywhere represented as cold, proud, and haughty in her manner, and unconciliating in her ordinary address. Her time was much spent in private, in the exercise of religious duty, or in needle-work and drawing; and her favourite seat at St Cloud was between two windows, from one of which she had a view over the beautiful woods which clothe the banks of the river, and from the other a distant prospect of the towers and domes of Paris.

Very different was the character which belonged to the former Empress, the first wife of Bonaparte,

Josephine: She passed the close of her life at the delightful retreat of Malmaison, a villa charmingly situated on the banks of the Seine, seven miles from Paris, on the road to St Germain. This villa had been her favourite residence while she continued Empress, and formed her only home after the period of her divorce;—here she lived in obscurity and retirement, without any of the pomp of a court, or any of the splendour which belonged to her former rank,—occupied entirely in the employment of gardening, or in alleviating the distresses of those around her. The shrubberies and gardens were laid out with singular beauty, in the English taste, and contained a vast variety of rare flowers, which she had for a long period been collecting. These shrubberies were to her the source of never-failing enjoyment; she spent many hours in them every day, working herself, or superintending the occupations of others; and in these delightful occupations seemed to return again to all the innocence and happiness of youth. She was beloved to the greatest degree by all the poor who inhabited the vicinity of her retreat, both for the gentleness of her manner, and her unwearied attention to their sufferings and their wants; and during the whole period of her retirement, she retained the esteem and affection of all classes of French citizens. The Emperor Alexander visited her repeatedly during the stay of the allied armies in Paris; and her death occasioned an universal feeling of regret, rarely to be met with

amidst the corruption and selfishness of the French metropolis.

There was something singularly striking in the history and character of this remarkable woman:— Born in a humble station, without any of the advantages which rank or education could afford, she was early involved in all the unspeakable miseries of the French revolution, and was extricated from her precarious situation only by being united to that extraordinary man whose crimes and whose ambition have spread misery through every country of Europe: Rising through all the gradations of rank through which he passed, she everywhere commanded the esteem and regard of all who had access to admire her private virtues; and when at length she was raised to the rank of Empress, she graced the imperial throne with all the charities and virtues of a humbler station. She bore, with unexampled magnanimity, the sacrifice of power and of influence which she was compelled to make: She carried into the obscurity of humble life all the dignity of mind which befitted the character of an Empress of France; and exercised, in the delightful occupations of country life, or in the alleviation of the severity of individual distress, that firmness of mind and gentleness of disposition with which she had lightened the weight of imperial dominion, and softened the rigour of despotic power.

The Forest of Fontainbleau exhibits scenery of a more picturesque and striking character than is to be met with in any other part of the north of France.

It is situated 40 miles from Paris, on the great road to Rome, and the appearance of the country through which this road runs, is, for the most part, flat and uninteresting. It runs through a continued plain, in a straight line between tall rows of elm trees, whose lower branches are uniformly cut off for fire-wood to the peasantry; and exhibits, for the most part, no other feature than the continued riches of agricultural produce. At the distance of seven miles from the town of Fontainbleau, you first discern the forest, covering a vast ridge of rocks, stretching as far as the eye can reach, from right to left, and presenting a dark irregular outline on the surface of the horizon. The cultivation continues, with all its uniformity, to the very foot of the ridge; but the moment you pass the boundaries of the forest, you find yourself surrounded at once with all the wildness and luxuriance of natural scenery. The surface of the ground is broken and irregular, rising at times into vast piles of shapeless rocks, and enclosing at others small vallies, in which the wood grows in endless beauty, unblighted by the chilling blasts of northern climates. In these vallies, the oak, the ash, and the beech, exhibit the peculiar magnificence of forest scenery, while, on the neighbouring hills, the birch waves its airy foliage round the dark masses of rock which terminate the view. Nothing can be conceived more striking than the scenery which this variety of rock and wood produce in every part of this romantic forest. At times you pass through an unbroken mass of aged timber, surrounded by the

native grandeur of forest scenery, and undisturbed by any traces of human habitation, except in those rude paths which occasionally open a passing view into the remoter parts of the forest. At others, the path winds through great masses of rock, piled in endless confusion upon each other, in the crevices of which, the fern and the heath grow in all the luxuriance of southern vegetation; while their summits are covered by aged oaks of the wildest forms, whose crossing boughs throw an eternal shade over the ravines below, and afford room only to discern at the farthest distance the summits of those beautiful hills, on which the light foliage of the birch trembles in the ray of an unclouded sun, or waves on the blue of a summer heaven.

To those who have had the good fortune to see the beautiful scenery of the Trosacks in Scotland, of Matlock in Derbyshire, or of the wooded Fells in Cumberland, it may afford some idea of the Forest of Fontainbleau, to say that it combines scenery of a similar description with the aged magnificence of Windsor Forest. Over its whole extent there are scattered many detached oaks of vast dimensions, which seem to be of an older race in the growth of the Forest,—whose lowest boughs stretch above the top of the wood which surrounds them,—and whose decayed summits afford a striking contrast to the young and luxuriant foliage with which their stems are enveloped. When we visited Fontainbleau, it was occupied by the old imperial guard, which still remained in that station after the abdica-

tion of Bonaparte; and we frequently met parties, or detached stragglers of them, wandering in the most solitary parts of the Forest. Their warlike and weather-beaten appearance; their battered arms and worn accoutrements; the dark feathers of their caps, and the sallow ferocious aspect of their countenances, suited the savage character of the scenery with which they were surrounded, and threw over the gloom and solitude of the Forest that wild expression with which the genius of Salvator dignified the features of uncultivated nature.

The town and palace of Fontainbleau is situated in a small plain near the centre of the forest, and surrounded on all sides by the rocky ridges with which it is everywhere intersected. The palace is a large irregular building, composed of many squares, and fitted up in the inside with the utmost splendour of imperial magnificence. We were there shewn the apartments in which Napoleon dwelt during his stay in the palace, after the capture of Paris by the allied troops; and the desk at which he always wrote, and where his abdication was signed. It was covered with white leather, scratched over in every direction, and marked with innumerable wipings of the pen, among which we perceived his own name, Napoleon, frequently written as in a very hurried and irregular hand; and one sentence which began, Que Dieu, Napoleon, Napoleon. The servants in the palace agreed in stating, that the Emperor's gaiety and fortitude of mind never deserted him during the ruin of his fortune; that he was engaged in his

writing-chamber during the greater part of the day, and walked for two hours on the terrace, in close conversation with Marshal Ney. Several officers of the imperial guard repeated the speech which he made to his troops on leaving them after his abdication of the throne, which was precisely what appeared in the English newspapers. So great was the enthusiasm produced by this speech among the soldiers present, that it was received with shouts and cries of Vive l'Empereur, A Paris, A Paris! and when he departed under the custody of the allied Commissioners, the whole army wept; there was not a dry eye in the multitude who were assembled to witness his departure. Even the imperial guard, who had been trained in scenes of suffering from their first entry into the service—who had been inured for a long course of years to the daily sight of human misery, and had constantly made a sport of all the afflictions which are fitted to move the human heart, shared in the general grief; they seemed to forget the degradation in which their commander was involved, the hardships to which they had been exposed, and the destruction which he had brought upon their brethren in arms; they remembered him when he stood victorious on the field of Austerlitz, or passed in triumph through the gates of Moscow, and shed over the fall of their Emperor those tears of genuine sorrow which they denied to the deepest scenes of private suffering, or the most aggravated instances of individual distress. It is impossible not to regret that feelings so exalting to human nature

should have been awakened by one who shared so little in their enthusiasm himself; that the sufferings of thousands should have been forgotten in the fate of one to whom the miseries of others never afforded a subject of regret; and that the only occasion on which generous sentiments should have been manifested by the French army, should have been the overthrow of that power by which their ambition and their wickedness had been supported.

We had the good fortune to see the infantry of the old guard drawn up in line in the streets of Fontainbleau, and their appearance was such as fully answered the idea we had formed of that body of veteran soldiers, who had borne the French eagles through every capital of Europe. Their aspect was bold and martial; there was a keenness in their eyes which bespoke the characteristic intelligence of the French soldiers, and a ferocity in the expression of their countenances which seemed to have been unsubdued even by the unparalleled disasters in which their country had been involved. The people of the town itself complained in the bitterest terms of their licentious conduct, and repeatedly said that they dreaded them more as friends than the Cossacks themselves as enemies. They seemed to harbour the most unbounded resentment against the people of this country; their countenances bore the expression of the strongest enmity as we walked along their line, and we frequently heard them mutter among themselves, in the most emphatic manner, *Sacre Dieu, voila les Anglois!*—Whatever the atrocity of their

conduct, however, might have been to the people of their own, as well as every other country, it was impossible not to feel the strongest emotion at the sight of the veteran soldiers whose exploits had so long rivetted the attention of all who felt an interest in the civilized world. These were the men who first raised the glory of the republican armies on the plains of Italy; who survived the burning climate of Egypt, and chained victory to the imperial standards at Jena, at Friedland and Austerlitz—who followed the career of victory to the walls of the Kremlin, and marched undaunted through the ranks of death amid the snows of Russia;—who witnessed the ruin of France under the walls of Leipsic, and struggled to save its falling fortune on the heights of Laon; and who preserved, in the midst of national humiliation, and when surrounded by the mighty foreign Powers, that undaunted air and unshaken firmness, which even in the moment of defeat, commanded the respect of their antagonists in arms.

Beyond the town of Fontainbleau, there rises a ridge of steep hills, which prevents any view in that direction into the distant parts of the forest. The road to their summit lies through the Imperial Gardens, and is surrounded by the artificial forms and regular walks which marks the character of the French gardening. When you reach the summit, however, the character of the scene instantly changes, and you pass at once into the utmost wildness of desolated nature. The foreground is broken by barren rock, or covered with the beautiful forms of the

weeping birch; immediately below there lies a lonely valley, strewed with masses of grey stone, without the slightest trace of human habitation, while, in the farthest distance, the forest is discerned, clothing the sides of those broken ridges which rise in endless confusion on the surface of the horizon. At the moment when we reached this spot, the sun was setting in the west; the cold grey of the stone which covered the ravines, was dimly discerned through the obscure light which the approach of night produced, while the rugged outline of the rocks beyond was projected in the deepest shadow on the bright light of the departing day. The stillness of the evening suited the solitude and the solemnity of the scene; it threw over the wildness of the scenery a softer character, and rendered it expressive of more soothing feeling; and presented nature in a moment of unbroken repose, save where the airy forms of the birch sighed in the breeze of the summer heaven, or waved on the gold of the western sky.

There is no scenery round Paris so striking as the forest of Fontainbleau, but the heights of Belleville exhibit nature in a more pleasing aspect, and are distinguished by features of a gentler character. Montmartre, and the ridge of Belleville, form those celebrated heights which command Paris on the northern side, and which were so obstinately contested between the allies and the French, on the 30th March 1814, previous to the capture of Paris by the allied Sovereigns. Montmartre is covered

for the most part with houses, and presents nothing to attract the eye of the observer, except the extensive view which is to be met with at its summit. The heights of Belleville, however, are varied with wood, with orchards, vineyards, and gardens, interspersed with cottages and villas, and cultivated with the utmost care. There are few enclosures, but the whole extent of the ground is thickly studded with walnuts, fruit-trees, and forest timber, which, from a distance, give it the appearance of one continued wood. On a nearer approach, however, you find it intersected in every direction by small paths, which wind among the vineyards, or through the woods with which the hills are covered, and present at every turn, those charming little scenes which form the peculiar characteristic of woodland scenery. The cottages, half hid by the profusion of fruit-trees, or embosomed in the luxuriant woods, with which they are everywhere surrounded, increase the interest which the scenery itself is fitted to produce: they combine the delightful idea of the peasant's enjoyment with the beauty of the spot on which his dwelling is placed; and awaken, in the midst of the boundless luxuriance of vegetable nature, those deeper feelings of moral delight, which spring from the contemplation of human happiness.

To a northern eye, there is nothing so delightful as this luxuriance of vegetation, which rises amidst the warmth of southern climates. The sterile rocks and rugged mountains of northern regions, exhibit

nature in her native rudeness, her features bear a harsher aspect, and her forms are expressive of more melancholy feeling; but under the genial warmth of a southern sun, she is arrayed in a robe of softer colours, and beams with the expression of a gentler character. She there appears surrounded by the luxuriance of vegetable life: she pours forth her bounty with a profusion which the partizans of utility would call prodigality, and covers the earth with a splendour of beauty, which serves no other purpose, than to minister to the delight of human existence. Amidst the riches with which man is surrounded, his destiny appears happier than in more desolate situations; we forget the sufferings of the individual in the profusion of beauty with which he is surrounded; and impute to the inhabitants of these delightful regions, those feelings of happiness which spring in our own minds from the contemplation of the scenery in which they are placed.

The effect of the charming scenery on the heights of Belleville, is much increased by the distant objects which terminate some parts of the view. To the east, the high and gloomy towers of Vincennes rise over the beautiful woods with which the sides of the hill are adorned; and give an air of solemnity to the scene, arising from the remembrance of the tragic events of which it was the theatre. To the south, the domes and spires of Paris can occasionally be discovered through the openings of the wood with which the foreground is enriched, and present the capital at that pleasing distance, when the minuter

parts of the buildings are concealed, when its prominent features alone are displayed, and the whole is softened by the obscure light which distance throws over the objects of nature. To an English mind, the effect of the whole is infinitely increased, by the animating associations with which this scenery is connected;—by the remembrance of the mighty struggle between freedom and slavery, which was here terminated;—of the heroic deeds which were here performed, and the unequalled magnanimity which was here displayed. It was here that the expiring efforts of military despotism were overthrown—that the armies of Russia stood triumphant over the power of France, and nobly avenged the ashes of their own capital, by sparing that of their prostrate enemy.

When we visited the heights of Belleville, the traces of the recent struggle were visibly imprinted on the villages and woods with which the hill is covered. The marks of blood were still to be discerned on the chausseé which leads through the village of Pantin; the elm trees which line the road were cut asunder or bored through with cannon shot, and their stems riddled in many parts, with the incessant fire of the grape shot. The houses in La Villette, Belleville and Pantin, were covered with the marks of musket shot; the windows of many were shattered, or wholly destroyed, and the interior of the rooms broken by the balls which seemed to have pierced every part of the building. So thickly were the

houses in some places covered with these marks, that it appeared almost incredible how any one could have escaped from so destructive a fire. Even the beautiful gardens with which the slope of the heights are adorned, and the inmost recesses of the wood of Romainville bore throughout, the marks of the desperate struggles which they had lately witnessed, and exhibited the symptoms of fracture or destruction in the midst of the luxuriance of natural beauty;—yet, though they had so recently been the scene of mortal combat; though the ashes of the dead yet lay in heaps on different parts of the field of battle, the prolific powers of nature were undecayed: the vines clustered round the broken fragments of the instruments of war,—the corn spread a sweeter green over the fields, which were yet wet with human blood, and the trees waved with renovated beauty over the uncoffined remains of the departed brave; emblematic of the decay of man, and of the immortality of nature.

The French have often been accused of selfishness, and the indifference which they often manifest to the fate of their relations, affords too much reason to believe that the social affections have little permanent influence on their minds. We must, however, admit, that they exhibit in misfortunes of a different kind—in calamities which really press upon their own enjoyments of life, the same gaiety of heart, and the same undisturbed equanimity of disposition. That gaiety in misfortune, which is so painful to every observer, when it is to

be found in the midst of family distress, becomes delightful when it exists under the deprivation of the selfish gratification to which the individual had been accustomed. Both here, and in other parts of France, where the houses of the peasants had been wholly destroyed by the allied armies, we had occasion frequently to observe and admire the equanimity of mind with which these poor people bore the loss of all their property. For an extent of 30 miles in one direction, towards the north of Champagne, every house near the great road had been burnt or pillaged for the firewood which it contained, both by the French and the allied armies, and the people were everywhere compelled to sleep in the open air. When we spoke to them on the subject of their losses, they answered with smiles, "Tout est de-"truit: tout est brulè, tout, tout;" and seemed to derive amusement from the completeness of the devastation. The men were everywhere rebuilding their fallen walls, with a cheerfulness which never would have existed in England under similar circumstances; and the little children laboured in the gardens during the day, and slept under the vines at night, without exhibiting any signs of distress for their disconsolate situation. In many places, we saw groupes of these little children in the midst of the ruined houses, or under the shattered trees, playing with the musket shot, or trying to roll the cannon balls by which the destruction of their dwellings had been effected:—exhibiting a picture of

youthful joy and native innocence, while sporting with the instruments of human destruction, which the genius of Sir Joshua Reynolds would have moulded into the expression of pathetic feeling, or employed as the means of moral improvement.

CHAPTER V.

PARIS—THE LOUVRE.

To those who have had the good fortune to see the pictures and statues which are preserved in the Louvre, all description of these works must appear superfluous; and to those who have not had this good fortune, such an attempt could convey no adequate idea of the objects which are described. There is nothing more uninteresting than the catalogue of pictures which are to be found in the works of many modern travellers; nor any thing in general more ridiculous than the ravings of admiration with which this catalogue is described, and with which the reader in general is little disposed to sympathise. Without attempting, therefore, to enumerate the great works which are there to be met with, we shall confine ourselves to a simple object, to the delineation of the *general character* by which the different schools

of painting are distinguished, and the great features in which they all differ from the sculpture of ancient times. For the justice of these observations, we must of course appeal to those who have examined this great collection; and in the prosecution of them, we pretend to nothing more than the simple account of the feelings which, we are persuaded, must have occurred to all those who have viewed it without any knowledge of the rules which art has established, or the more despicable principles which connoisseurs have maintained.

For an attempt of this kind, the Louvre presents singular advantages, from the unparalleled collection of paintings of every school and description which are there to be met with, and the facility with which you can there trace the progress of the art from its first beginning to the period of its greatest perfection. And it is in this view that the collection of these works into one museum, however much to be deplored as the work of unprincipled ambition, and however much it may have diminished the impression which particular objects, from the influence of association, produced in their native place, is yet calculated to produce the greatest of all improvements in the progress of the art; by divesting particular schools and particular works of the unbounded influence which the effect of early association, or the prejudices of national feeling, have given them in their original situation, and placing them where their real nature is to be judged of by a more extended circle, and subjected to the examination of more impartial sentiments.

The character of every school of painting has been determined by some peculiar circumstances under which that school first originated, which have contributed to form its greatest excellencies, and been the real source of its principal defects; and it has unfortunately happened that the unbounded admiration for the great production of these schools, has everywhere formed the national taste, and tended to perpetuate their errors, when the progress of society would otherwise have led to their earlier abandonment. It deserves well to be considered, therefore, whether the restoration of these monuments of art to their original situations, while it would unquestionably enhance the veneration with which they would severally be regarded, would not perpetuate the defects which particular circumstances have stamped on their school of composition; and whether the continuance of them in their present situation, however fatal to the implicit veneration for the works of antiquity, is not calculated by the comparison of their excellencies and the exhibition of their defects, to form a new school, which shall possess a more general character, and be adapted for the admiration of a more unbiassed public. It is in the despotic reign of arbitrary governments that the influence of ancient error, and the power of ancient prejudice is most unbounded; but it is in the unbiassed discussion which distinguishes a free state, that the influence of prejudice is forgotten, and truth emerges from the collision of opposite opinions. However this may be, and whatever deter-

mination on this subject may be formed by the Sovereigns who now hold the destinies of Europe in their hands, it will not, it is hoped, be deemed an useless attempt, if we now endeavour to state, in a few words, the impression which was produced by this great collection of the works of art, which has been felt, we doubt not, by all who have viewed it with untutored eyes, but has not hitherto been described by those so much better able to do justice to it than ourselves.

The first hall of the Louvre in the Picture Gallery is filled with paintings of the French school. The principal artists whose works are here exhibited, are Le Brun, Gaspar and Nicolas Poussin, Claude Lorrain, Vernet, and the modern painters, Gerard and David. The general character of the school of French historical painting, is the expression of *passion and violent emotion.* The colouring is for the most part brilliant; the canvas crowded with figures, and the incident selected that in which the painter might have the best opportunity of displaying his knowledge of the human frame, or the varied expression of the human countenance. In the pictures of the modern school of French painting, this peculiarity is pushed to an extravagant length, and, fortunately for the art, displays the false principles on which the system of their composition is founded. The moment seized is uniformly that of the strongest and most violent passion; the principal actors in the piece are represented in a state of phrenzied exertion, and the whole

anatomical knowledge of the artist is displayed in the endless contortions into which the human frame is thrown. In David's celebrated picture of the three Horatii, this peculiarity appears in the most striking light. The works of this artist may excite admiration, but it is the limited and artificial admiration of the schools; of those who have forgot the end of the art in the acquisition of the technical knowledge with which it is accompanied, or the display of the technical powers which its execution involves.

The paintings of *Vernet*, in this collection, are perhaps the finest specimens of that beautiful master, and they entitle him to a higher place in the estimation of mankind than he seems yet to have obtained from the generality of observers. There is a delicacy of colouring, an unity of design, and a harmony of expression in his works, which accord well with the simplicity of the subjects which his taste has selected, and the general effect which it was his object to produce. In the representation of the sun dispelling the mists of a cloudy morning; of his setting rays gilding the waves of a western sea; or of that undefined beauty which moonlight throws over the objects of nature, the works of this artist are perhaps unrivalled.

The paintings of *Claude* are by no means equal to what we had expected, from the celebrity which his name has acquired, or the matchless beauty which the engravings from him possess. They are but

eleven in number, and cannot be, in any degree, compared with those which are to be found in Mr Angerstein's collection. To those, however, who have been accustomed to study the designs of this great master, through the medium of the engraved copies, and above all, in the unrivalled works of Woollet, the sight of the original pictures must, perhaps at all times, create a feeling of disappointment. There is an unity of effect in the engravings which can never be met with amidst the distraction of colouring in the original pictures; and the imagination clothes the beautiful shades of the copy with finer tints than even the pencil of Claude has been able to supply. "I have shewn you," said Corinne to Oswald, "St Peter's for the first time, when the brilliancy of its decorations might appear in full splendour, in the rays of the sun: I reserve for you a finer, and a more profound enjoyment, to behold it by the light of the moon." Perhaps there is a distinction of the same kind between the gaudy brilliancy of varied colours, and the chaster simplicity of uniform shadows; and it is probably for this reason, that on the first view of a picture which you have long admired in the simplicity of engraved effect, you involuntarily recede from the view, and seek in the obscure light, and uncertain tint, which distance produces, to recover that uniform tone and general character, which the splendour of colouring is so apt to destroy. It is a feeling similar to that

which Lord Byron has so finely described, as arising from the beauty of moonlight scenery :—

————" Mellow'd to that tender light
Which Heaven to gaudy day denies."

The Dutch and Flemish school, to which you next advance, possesses merit, and is distinguished by a character of a very different description. It was the well-known object of this school, to present an exact and faithful *imitation of nature ;* to exaggerate none of its faults, and enhance none of its excellencies, but exhibit it as it really appears to the eye of an ordinary spectator. Its artists selected, in general, some scene of humour or amusement, in the discovery of which, the most ignorant spectators might discover other sources of pleasure from those which the merit of the art itself afforded. They did not pretend, in general, to aim at the exhibition of passion or powerful emotion: their paintings, therefore, are free from that painful display of theatrical effect, which characterises the French school; their object was not to represent those deep scenes of sorrow or suffering, which accord with the profound feelings which it was the object of the Italian school to awaken ; they want, therefore, the dignity and grandeur which the works of the greater Italian painters possess: their merit consists in the faithful delineation of those ordinary scenes and common occurrences, which are familiar to the eye of the most careless observer. The power of the painter, there-

fore, could be displayed only in the minuteness of the finishing, or the brilliancy of the effect: and he endeavoured, by the powerful contrast of light and shade, to give an higher character to his works, than the nature of their subjects could otherwise admit.

The pictures of Teniere, Ostade, and Gerard Dow, possess these merits, and are distinguished by this character in the highest degree; but their qualities are so well known in this country, as to render any observations on them superfluous. There is a very great collection here preserved, of the works of Rembrandt, and their design and effect bear, in general, a higher character than belongs to most of the works of this celebrated master.

In one respect, the collection in the Louvre is altogether unrivalled; in the number and beauty of the *Wouvermans* which are there to be met with; nor is it possible, without having seen it, to appreciate, with any degree of justice, the variety of design, the accuracy of drawing, or delicacy of finishing, which distinguish his works from those of any other painter of a similar description. There are 38 of his pieces there assembled, all in the finest state of preservation, and all displaying the same unrivalled beauty of colouring and execution. In their design, however, they widely differ; and they exhibit, in the most striking manner, the real object to which painting should be applied, and the causes of the errors in which its composition has been involved. His works, for the most part, are crowded with

figures; his subjects are in general battle-pieces, or spectacles of military pomp, or the animated scenes which the chace presents; and he seems to have exhausted all the efforts of his genius, in the variety of incident and richness of execution, which these subjects are fitted to afford. From the confused and indeterminate expression, however, which the multitude of their objects exhibit, we turn with delight to those simpler scenes in which his mind seems to have reposed, after the fatigues which it had undergone: to the representation of a single incident, or the delineation of a certain occurrence—to the rest of the traveller after the fatigues of the day—to the repose of the horse in the intermission of labour—to the return of the soldier, after the dangers of the campaign;—scenes, in which every thing combines for the uniform character, and where the genius of the artist has been able to give to the rudest occupations of men, and even to the objects of animal life, the expression of genuine poetical feeling.

The pictures of *Vandyke* and *Rubens* belong to a much higher school than that which rose out of the wealth and the limited taste of the Dutch people. There are 60 pictures of the latter of these masters in the Louvre, and, combined with the celebrated Gallery in the Luxembourg Palace, they form the finest assemblage of them which is to be met with in the world. The character of his works differs essentially from that both of the French and the Dutch schools: he was employed, not in painting cabinet pictures for wealthy merchants, but in designing great altar pieces

for splendid churches, or commemorating the glory of sovereigns in imperial galleries. The greatness of his genius rendered him fit to attempt the representation of the most complicated and difficult objects; but in the confidence of this genius, he seems to have lost sight of the genuine object of composition in his art. He attempts what it is impossible for painting to accomplish—he aims at telling a whole story by the expression of a single picture; and seems to pour forth the profusion of his fancy, by crowding his canvas with a multiplicity of figures, which serve no other purpose, than that of shewing the endless power of creation which the author possessed. In each figure, there is great vigour of conception, and admirable power of execution; but the whole possesses no general character, and produces no permanent emotion. There is a mixture of allegory and truth in many of his greatest works, which is always painful; there is a grossness in his conception of the female form, which destroys the symmetry of female beauty; and a wildness of imagination in his general design, which violates the feelings of ordinary taste. You survey his pictures with astonishment—at the power of thought and the brilliancy of colouring which they display: but they produce no lasting impression on the mind; they have struck no chord of feeling or emotion, and you leave them with no other feeling, than that of regret, that the confusion of objects destroys the effect which each in itself might be fitted to produce. And if one has made a deeper impression; if you dwell on

it with that delight which it should ever be the object of painting to produce, you find that your pleasure proceeds from a single figure, or the expression of a detached part of the picture; and that, in the contemplation of it you have, without being conscious of it, detached your mind from the observation of all that might interfere with its characteristic expression, and thus preserved that unity of emotion which is essential to the existence of the emotion of taste, but which the confusion of incident is so apt to destroy.

There are a few landscapes by *Ruysdael* to be here met with, which are distinguished by that boldness of conception, fidelity of execution, and coldness of colouring, which have often been remarked as the characteristics of this powerful master.

It is in the Italian school, however, that the collection in the Louvre is most unrivalled, and it is from its character that the general tendency of the modern school of historical painting is principally to be determined.

The general object of the Italian school appears to be the expression of *passion*. The peculiar subjects which its painters were called on to represent, the sufferings and death of our Saviour, the varied misfortunes to which his disciples were exposed, or the multiplied persecutions which the early fathers of the church had to sustain, inevitably prescribed the object to which their genius was to be directed, and the peculiar character which their works were to assume. They have all, accordingly,

aimed at the expression of passion, and endeavoured to excite the pity, or awaken the sympathy of the spectator; though the particular species of passion which they have severally selected, has varied with the turn of mind which the artist possessed.

The works of *Dominichino* and of the *Caraccis*, of which there are a very great number, incline, in general, to the representation of what is dark or gloomy in character, or what is terrific and appalling in suffering. The subjects which the first of these masters has in general selected, are the cells of monks, the energy of martyrs, or the sufferings of the crucifixion; and the dark-blue coldness of his colouring, combined with the depth of his shadows, accord well with the gloomy character which his compositions possess. The *Caraccis*, amidst the variety of objects which their genius has embraced, have dwelt, in general, upon the expression of sorrow—of that deep and profound sorrow which the subjects of Sacred History were so fitted to afford, and which was so well adapted to that religious emotion which it was their object to excite.

Guido Reni, Carlo Maratti and Murillo, are distinguished by a gentler character; by the expression of tenderness and sweetness of disposition: and the subjects which they have chosen are, for the most part, those which were fitted for the display of this predominant expression;—the Holy Family, the flight into Egypt, the youth of St John, the penitence of the Magdalene. While, in common with all their brethren, they have aimed at the expres-

sion of emotion, it was an emotion of a softer kind than that which arose from the energy of passion, or the violence of suffering; it was the emotion produced by more permanent feelings, and less turbulent affections; and from the character of this emotion, their execution has assumed a peculiar cast, and their composition been governed by a peculiar principle. Their colouring is seldom brilliant; there is a subdued tone pervading the greater part of their pictures; and they have limited themselves, in general, to the delineation of a single figure, or a small group, in which a single character of mind is prevalent.

Of the numerous and splendid collection of *Titian's*, which are here preserved, it is not necessary to give any description, because they consist, for the most part, of portraits, and our object is not to dwell on the richness of colouring, or powers of execution, but on the principles of composition by which the different schools of painting are distinguished.

There are only six paintings by Salvator Rosa in this collection, but they bear that wild and original character which is proverbially known to belong to the works of this great artist. One of his pieces is particularly striking, a skirmish of horse, accompanied by all the scenery in which he so peculiarly delighted. In the foreground is the ruins of an old temple, with its lofty pillars finely displayed in shadow above the summits of the horizon;—in the middle distance the battle is dimly discerned through the

driving rain, which obscures the view; while the back ground is closed by a vast ridge of gloomy rocks, rising into a dark and tempestuous sky. The character of the whole is that of sullen magnificence; and it affords a striking instance of the power of great genius, to mould the most varied objects in nature into the expression of one uniform poetical feeling.

Very different is the expression which belongs to the softer pictures of Correggio—of that great master, whose name is associated in every one's mind with all that is gentle or delicate in the imitation of nature. Perhaps it was from the force of this impression that his works did not completely come up to the expectations which we had been led to form. They are but eight in number, and do not comprehend the finest of his compositions. Their general character is that of tenderness and delicacy: there is a softness in his shading of the human form which is quite unrivalled, and a harmony in the general tone of his colouring, which is in perfect unison with the characteristic expression which it was his object to produce. There is a want of unity, however, in the composition of his figures, which does not accord with this harmony of execution; you dwell rather on the fine expression of individual form, than the combined tendency of the whole group, and leave the picture with the impression of the beauty of a single countenance, rather than the general character of the whole design. He has represented nature in its most engaging aspect, and given to in-

dividual figures all the charms of ideal beauty; but he wants that high strain of spiritual feeling, which belongs only to the works of Raphael.

There is but one picture by Carlo Dolci in the Louvre; but it alone is sufficient to mark the exquisite genius which its author possessed. It is of small dimensions, and represents the Holy Family, with the Saviour asleep. The finest character of design is here combined with the utmost delicacy of execution; the softness of the shadows exceeds that of Correggio himself; and the dark-blue colouring which prevails over the whole, is in perfect unison with the expression of that rest and quiet which the subject requires. The sleep of the Infant is perfection itself—it is the deep sleep of youth and of innocence, which no care has disturbed, and no sorrow embittered—and in the unbroken repose of which the features have relaxed into the expression of perfect happiness. All the features of the picture are in unison with this expression, except in the tender anxiety of the Virgin's eye; and all is at rest in the surrounding objects, save where her hand gently removes the veil to contemplate the unrivalled beauty of the Saviour's countenance.

Without the softness of shading or the harmony of colour which Correggio possessed, the works of Raphael possess a higher character, and aim at the expression of a sublimer feeling than those of any other artist whom modern Europe has produced. Like all his brethren, he has often been misled from the real object of his art, and tried, in the energy of

passion, or the confused expression of varied figures, to multiply the effect which his composition might produce. Like all the rest, he has failed in effecting what the constitution of the human mind renders impossible, and in this very failure, warned every succeeding age of the vanity of the attempt which his transcendent genius was unable to effect. It is this fundamental error that destroys the effect, even of his finest pieces; it is this, combined with the unapproachable nature of the presence which it reveals, that has rendered the Transfiguration itself a chaos of genius rather than a model of ideal beauty; nor will it, we hope, be deemed a presumptuous excess, if we venture to express our sentiments in regard to this great author, since it is from his own works alone that we have derived the means of appreciating his imperfections.

It is in his smaller pieces that the genuine character of Raphael's paintings is to be seen—in the figure of St Michael subduing the demon; in the beautiful tenderness of the Virgin and Child; in the unbroken harmony of the Holy Family; in the wildness and piety of the infant St John;—scenes, in which all the objects of the picture combine for the preservation of one uniform character, and where the native fineness of his mind appears undisturbed by the display of temporary passion, or the painful distraction of varied suffering.

There are no pictures of the English school in the Louvre, for the arms of France never prevailed in our island. From the splendid character,

however, which it early assumed under the distinguished guidance of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and from the high and philosophical principles which he at first laid down for the government of the art, there is every reason to believe that it ultimately will rival the celebrity of foreign genius: And it is in this view that the continuance of the gallery of the Louvre, in its present situation, is principally to be wished by the English nation—that the English artists may possess so near their own country so great a school for composition and design; that the imperfections of foreign schools may enlighten the views of English genius; and that the conquests of the French arms, by transferring the remains of ancient taste to these northern shores, may throw over its rising art that splendour which has hitherto been confined to the regions of the sun.

The great object, therefore, of all the modern schools of historical painting, seems to have been the delineation of an *affecting scene* or *interesting occurrence*; they have endeavoured to tell a story by the variety of incidents in a single picture; and seized, for the most part, the moment when passion was at its greatest height, or suffering appeared in its most excruciating form. The general character, accordingly, of the school, is the expression of passion or violent suffering; and in the prosecution of this object, they have endeavoured to exhibit it under all its aspects, and display all the effects which it could possibly produce on the human form, by the dif-

ferent figures which they have introduced. While this is the general character of the whole, there are of course numerous exceptions; and many of its greatest painters seem, in the representation of single figures, or in the compo sition of smaller groups, to have had in view the expression of less turbulent affections; to have aimed at the display of settled emotion or permanent feeling, and to have excluded every thing from their composition which was not in unison with this predominant expression.

The *Sculpture Gallery*, which contains 220 remains of ancient statuary, marks in the most decided manner the different objects to which this noble art was applied in ancient times. Unlike the paintings of modern Europe, their figures are almost uniformly at rest; they exclude passion or violent suffering from their design; and the moment which they select is not that in which a particular or transient emotion may be displayed, but in which the settled character of mind may be expressed. With the two exceptions of the Laocoon and the fighting Gladiator, there are none of the statues in the Louvre which are not the representation of the human figure in a state of repose; and the expression which the finest possess, is invariably that permanent expression which has resulted from the habitual frame and character of mind. Their figures seem to belong to a higher class of beings than that in which we are placed; they indicate a state in which passion, anxiety and emotion are no more; and where the unruffled repose of mind has moulded the features into

the perfect expression of the mental character. Even the countenance of the Venus de Medicis, the most beautiful which it has ever entered into the mind of man to conceive, and of which no copy gives the slightest idea, bears no trace of emotion, and none of the marks of human feeling; it is the settled expression of celestial beauty, and even the smile on her lip is not the fleeting smile of temporary joy, but the lasting expression of that heavenly feeling which sees in all around it the grace and loveliness which belongs to itself alone. It approaches nearer to that character which sometimes marks the countenance of female beauty when death has stilled the passions of the world; but it is not the cold expression of past character which survives the period of mortal dissolution; it is the living expression of present existence, radiant with the beams of immortal life, and breathing the air of eternal happiness.

The paintings of Raphael convey the most perfect idea of earthly beauty; and they denote the expression of all that is finest and most elevated in the character of the female mind. But there is a "human meaning in their eye," and they bear the marks of that anxiety and tenderness which belongs to the relations of present existence. The Venus displays the same beauty, freed from the cares which existence has produced; and her lifeless eye-balls gaze upon the multitude which surround her, as on a scene fraught only with the expression of universal joy.

In another view, the Apollo and the Venus ap-

pear to have been intended by the genius of antiquity, as expressive of the character of mind which distinguishes the different sexes; and in the expression of this character, they have exhausted all which it is possible for human imagination to produce upon the subject. The commanding air, and advanced step of the Apollo, exhibit *man* in his noblest aspect, as triumphing over the evils of physical nature, and restraining the energy of his disposition, in the consciousness of resistless power: the averted eye, and retiring grace of the Venus, are expressive of the modesty, gentleness and submission, which form the most beautiful features of the *female* character.

> Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed,
> For valour He, and contemplation, formed,
> For beauty She, and sweet attractive grace,
> He for God only, She for God in Him.

These words were said of our first parents by our greatest poet, after the influence of a pure religion had developed the real nature of the female character, and determined the place which woman was to hold in the scale of nature; but the idea had been expressed in a still finer manner two thousand years before, by the sculptors of antiquity; and amidst all the degradation of ancient manners, the prophetic genius of Grecian taste contemplated that ideal perfection in the character of the sexes, which was des-

tined to form the boundary of human progress in the remotest ages of human improvement.

The Apollo strikes a stranger with all its divine grandeur on the first aspect; subsequent examination can add nothing to the force of the impression which is then received. The Venus produces at first less effect, but gains upon the mind at every renewal, till it rivets the affections even more than the greatness of its unequalled rival—emblematic of the charm of female excellence, which, while it excites less admiration at first, than the loftier features of manly character, is destined to acquire a deeper influence, and lay the foundation of more indelible affection.

The Dying Gladiator is perhaps, after the two which we have mentioned, the finest statue which the Louvre contains. The moment chosen is finely adapted for the expression of ideal beauty, from a subject connected with painful ideas. It is not the moment of energy or struggling, when the frame is convulsed with the exertion it is making, or the countenance is deformed by the tumult of passion; it is the moment of expiring nature, when the figure is relaxed by the weakness of decay, and the mind is softened by the approach of death; it is the moment when the ferocity of combat is forgotten in the extinction of the interest which it had excited, when every unsocial passion is stilled by the weakness of exhausted nature, and the mind, in the last moments of life, is fraught with finer feelings than had belonged to the character of previous ex-

istence; it is a moment similar to that in which Tasso has so beautifully described the change in Clorinda's mind, after she had been mortally wounded by the hand of Tancred, but in which he was enabled to give her the inspiration of a greater faith, and the charity of a more gentle religion :—

Amico h'ai vinto : io te perdon. Perdona
Tu ancora, al corpo no che nulla pave
All' alma si : deh per lei prega ; e dona
Battesmo a me, ch'ogni mia colpa lave ;
In queste voci languide risuona
Un non so che di flebile e soave
Ch' al cor gli scende, ed ogni sdegno ammorza,
Egli occhi a lagrimar gl' invoglia e sforza.

The statues of antiquity were addressed to the multitude of the people; they were intended to awaken the devotion of all classes of citizens—to be felt and judged by all mankind. They are free, therefore, from all the peculiarities of national taste; they are purified from all the peculiarities of local circumstances; they have been rescued from that miserable degradation to which art is uniformly exposed, by taste being confined to a limited society; they have assumed, in consequence, that general character, which might suit the universal feelings of our nature, and that permanent expression which might speak to the heart of men through every succeeding age. The admiration, accordingly, for those works of art has been undiminished by the lapse of time; they excite the same feelings at the present time, as

when they came fresh from the hand of the Grecian artist, and are regarded by all nations with the same veneration on the banks of the Seine, as when they sanctified the temples of Athens, or adorned the gardens of Rome.

Even the rudest nations seem to have felt the force of this impression. The Hungarians and the Cossacks, as we ourselves have frequently seen, during the stay of the allied armies in Paris, ignorant of the name or the celebrity of those works of art, seemed yet to take a delight in the survey of the statues of antiquity, and in passing through the long line of marbled greatness which the Louvre presents, stopt involuntarily at the sight of the Venus, or clustered round the foot of the pedestal of the Apollo ;—indicating thus, in the expression of unaffected feeling, the force of that genuine taste for the beauty of nature, which all the rudeness of savage manners, and all the ferocity of war had not been able to destroy. The poor Russian soldier, whose knowledge of art was limited to the crucifix which he had borne in his bosom from his native land, still felt the power of ancient beauty, and in the spirit of the Athenians, who erected an altar to the Unknown God, did homage in silence to that unknown spirit which had touched a new chord in his untutored heart.

From the impression produced on our minds by the collection in the Louvre, we were led to form some general conclusions concerning the history and object of the arts, which we shall give in a

few words, as what suggested themselves to us on the contemplation of the greatest assemblage of the works of art which has ever been formed; but which we give with the utmost diffidence, and merely as the result of our own feelings and reflections.

The character of art in every country, appears to have been determined by the disposition of the people to whom it was addressed, and the object of its composition to have varied with the purpose it was called on to fulfil.—The Grecian statues were designed to excite the devotion of a cultivated people; to embody their conceptions of divine perfection; to realise the expression of that *character of mind* which they imputed to the deities whose temples they were to adorn: It was grace, or strength, or majesty, or youthful power, which they were to represent by the figures of Venus, of Hercules, of Jupiter, or of Apollo. Their artists accordingly were led to aim at the expression of *general character*: to exclude passion, or emotion, or suffering, from their design, and represent their figures in that state of repose where the permanent expression of mind ought to be displayed. It is perhaps in this circumstance that we are to discern the cause both of the peculiarity and the excellence of the Grecian statuary.

The Italian painters were early required to effect a different object. Their pictures were destined to represent the sufferings of nature; to display the persecution or death of our Saviour, the anguish of the Holy Family, the heroism of martyrs, the resignation of devotion. In the infancy of the arts, ac-

cordingly, they were led to study the expression of passion, of suffering and emotion; to aim at rousing the pity, or exciting the sympathy of the spectators; and to endeavour to characterise their paintings by the representation of temporary passion, not the expression of permanent character. Those beautiful pictures in which a different object seems to have been followed—in which the expression is that of permanent emotion, not transient passion, while they captivate our admiration, seem to be exceptions from the general design, and to have been suggested by the peculiar nature of the subject represented, or a particular firmness of mind in the artist. In these causes we may perhaps discern the origin of the peculiar character of the Italian school.

In the French school, the character and manners of the people seem to have carried this peculiarity to a still greater length. Their character led them to seek in every thing for stage effect; to admire the most extravagant and violent representations, and to value the efforts of art, not in proportion to their imitation of the qualities of nature, but in proportion to their resemblance to those artificial qualities on which their admiration was founded. The vehemence of their manner on the most ordinary occasions, rendered the most extravagant gestures requisite for the display of real passion; and their drama accordingly exhibits a mixture of dignity of sentiment, with violence of gesture, beyond measure surprising to a foreign spectator. The same disposition of the people has influenced the character of their historical

painting; and it is to be remembered, that the French school of painting succeeded the establishment of the French drama. It is hence that they have generally selected the moment of theatrical effect—the moment of phrenzied passion, or unparalleled exertion, and that their composition is distinguished by so many striking contrasts, and so laboured a display of momentary effect.

The Flemish or Dutch school of painting was neither addressed to the devotional nor the theatrical feelings of mankind; it was neither intended to awaken the sympathy of religious pity, nor excite the admiration of artificial dispositions—it was addressed to wealthy men of vulgar capacities, capable of appreciating only the merit of minute detail, or the faithfulness of exact imitation. It is hence that their painting possesses excellencies and defects of so peculiar a description; that they have carried the minuteness of finishing to so unparalleled a degree of perfection; that the brilliancy of their lights has thrown a splendour over the vulgarity of their subjects, and that they are in general so utterly destitute of all the refinement and sentiment which sprung from the devotional feelings of the Italian people.

The subjects which the Dutch painters chose were subjects of low humour, calculated to amuse a rich and uncultivated people: the subjects of the French school were heroic adventure, suited to the theatrical taste of a more elevated society: the subjects of the Italian school were the incidents of sacred history, suited to the devotional feelings of a reli-

gious people. In all, the subjects to which painting was applied, and the character of the art itself, was determined by the peculiar circumstances or disposition of the people to whom it was addressed: so that, in these instances, there has really happened what Mr Addison stated should ever be the case, that "the taste should not conform to the art, but the art to the taste."

We soon perceived that the statues rivetted our admiration more than any of the other works of art which the Louvre presents; and that amongst the pictures, those made the deepest impression which approached nearest to the character by which the Grecian statuary is distinguished. In the prosecution of this train of thought, we were led to the following conclusions, relative to the separate objects to which painting and statuary should be applied.

1. That the object of statuary should ever be the same to which it was always confined by the ancients, viz.—the representation of CHARACTER. The very materials on which the sculptor has to operate, render his art unfit for the expression either of emotion or passion; and the figure, when finished, can bear none of the marks by which they are to be distinguished. It is a figure of cold, and pale, and lifeless marble, without the varied colour which emotion produces, or the living eye which passion animates. The eye is the feature which is expressive of present emotion; it is it which varies with all the changes which the mind undergoes; it is it which

marks the difference between joy and sorrow, between love and hatred, between pleasure and pain, between life and death. But the eye, with all the endless expressions which it bears, is lost to the sculptor; its gaze must ever be cold and lifeless to him; its fire is quenched in the stillness of the tomb. A statue, therefore, can never be expressive of living emotion; it can never express those transient feelings which mark the play of the living mind. It is an abstraction of character which has no relation to present existence; a shadow in which all the permanent features of the mind are expressed, but none of the passions of the mind are shewn: like the figures of snow, which the magic of Okba formed to charm the solitude of Leila's dwelling, it bears the character of the human form, but melts at the warmth of human feeling. The power of the sculptor is limited to the delineation of those signs alone by which the permanent qualities of mind are displayed: his art, therefore, should be confined to the representation of that permanent character of which they are expressive.

2. While such is the object to which statuary would appear to be destined, painting embraces a wider range, and is capable of more varied expression: It is expressive of the living form; it paints the eye and opens the view of the present mind; it imitates all the fleeting changes which constitute the signs of present emotion. It is not, therefore, an abstraction of character which the painter is to represent; not an ideal form, expressive only of the

qualities of permanent character; but an actual being, alive to the impressions of present existence, and bound by the ties of present affection. It is in the delineation of these affections, therefore, that the powers of the painter principally consists; in the representation, not of simple character, but of character influenced or subdued by emotion. It is the representation of the joy of youth, or the repose of age; of the sorrow of innocence, or the penitence of guilt; of the tenderness of parental affection, or the gratitude of filial love. In these, and a thousand other instances, the expression of the emotion constitutes the beauty of the picture; it is that which gives the tone to the character which it is to bear; it is that which strikes the chord which vibrates in every human heart. The object of the painter, therefore, is the expression of EMOTION, of that emotion which is blended with the character of the mind which feels, and gives to that character the interest which belongs to the events of present existence.

3. The object of the painter being the representation of emotion in all the varied situations which life produces, it follows, that every thing in his picture should be in unison with the predominant expression which he wishes it to bear; that the composition should be as simple as is consistent with the developement of this expression; and the colouring, such as accords with the character by which this emotion is distinguished. It is here that the genius of the artist is principally to be displayed, in the selection of

such figures as suit the general impression which the whole is to produce; and the choice of such a tone of colouring, as harmonises with the feeling of mind which it is his object to produce. The distraction of varied colours—the confusion of different figures—the contrast of opposite expressions, completely destroy the effect of the composition; they fix the mind to the observation of what is particular in the separate parts, and prevent that uniform and general emotion which arises from the perception of one uniform expression in all the parts of which it is composed. It is in this very perception, however, that the source of the beauty is to be found; it is in the undefined feeling to which it gives rise, that the delight of the emotion of taste consists. Like the harmony of sounds in musical composition, it produces an effect, of which we are unable to give any account; but which we feel to be instantly destroyed by the jarring sound of a different note, or the discordant effect of a foreign expression. It is in the neglect of this great principle that the defect of many of the first pictures of modern times is to be found—in the confused multitude of unnecessary figures—in the contradictory expression of separate parts—in the distracting brilliancy of gorgeous colours: in the laboured display, in short, of the power of the artist, and the utter dereliction of the object of the art. The great secret, on the other hand, of the beauty of the most exquisite specimens of modern art, lies in the simplicity of expression which they bear, in their production of one uniform

emotion, from all the parts of one harmonious composition. For the production of this unity of emotion, the surest means will be found to consist in the selection of *as few figures* as is consistent with the developement of the characteristic expression of the composition; and it is, perhaps, to this circumstance, that we are to impute the unequalled charm which belongs to the pictures of single figures, or small groups, in which a single expression is alone attempted.

4. The last principle of the art appeared to be, that both painting and sculpture are wholly unfit for the representation of PASSION, as expressed by motion; and that, to attempt to delineate it, necessarily injures the effect of the composition. Neither, it is clear, can express actual motion: they should not attempt, therefore, to represent those passions of the mind which motion alone is adequate to express. The attempt to delineate violent passion, accordingly, uniformly produces a painful or a ridiculous effect: it does not even convey any conception of the passion itself, because its character is not known by the expression of any single moment, but by the rapid changes which result from the perturbed state into which the mind is thrown. It is hence that passion seems so ridiculous when seen at a distance, or without the cause of its existence being known: and it is hence, that if a human figure were petrified in any of the stages of passion, it would have so painful or insane an appearance.—As painting, therefore, cannot exhibit the rapid

changes in which the real expression of passion consists, it should not attempt its delineation at all. Its real object is, the expression of *emotion*, of that more settled state of the human mind when the changes of passion are gone—when the countenance is moulded into the expression of permanent feeling, and the existence of this feeling is marked, by the permanent expression which the features have assumed.

The greatest artists of ancient and modern times, accordingly, have selected, even in the representation of violent exertion, that moment of temporary repose, when a permanent expression is given to the figure. Even the Laocöon is not in a state of actual exertion: it is represented in that moment when the last effort has been made; when straining against an invincible power has given to the figure the aspect at last of momentary repose; and when despair has placed its settled mark on the expression of the countenance. The fighting Gladiator is not represented in a state of present activity, but in that moment when he is preparing his mind for the future and final contest, and when, in this deep concentration of his powers, the pause which the genius of the artist has given, expresses more distinctly to the eye of the spectator the determined character of the combatant than all that the struggle or agony of the combat itself could afterwards display.

The Grecian statues in the Louvre may be considered as the most perfect works of human genius,

and after surveying the different schools of painting which it contains, we could not but feel those higher conceptions of human form, and of human nature, which the taste of ancient statuary had formed. It is not in the moment of action that it has represented man, but in the moment after action, when the tumult of passion has ceased, and all that is great or dignified in moral nature remains. It is not Hercules in the moment of earthly combat, when every muscle was swollen with the strength he was exerting; but Hercules, in the moment of transformation into a nobler being, when the exertion of mortality has passed, and his powers seem to repose in the tranquillity of Heaven; not Apollo, when straining his youthful strength in drawing the bow; but Apollo, when the weapon was discharged, watching, with unexulting eye, its resistless course, and serene in the enjoyment of immortal power. And inspired by these mighty examples, it is not St Michael when struggling with the Demon, and marring the beauty of angelic form by the violence of earthly passion, that Raphael represents; but St Michael, in the moment of unruffled triumph, restraining the might of Almighty power, and radiant with the beams of eternal mercy.

CHAPTER VI.

PARIS—THE FRENCH CHARACTER AND MANNERS.

We do not, by any means, consider ourselves as qualified to enter fully into the interesting subject of the national character of the French; but we shall venture to state, in this place, what appeared to us its most striking peculiarities, particularly as it is observed at Paris. Our stay in the capital was too short, and our opportunities of observation too limited, to entitle us to speak with confidence; but it is to be remembered on the other hand, that there is a surprising uniformity of character among the French, which facilitates observation. The habit of constant intercourse in society, which consti-

tutes their greatest pleasure, and has made them, in their own opinion, the most polished nation on earth, appears not merely to have assimilated their manners to one another, in the manner so finely illustrated by the celebrated simile of Sterne, but to have engendered a kind of conventional standard character, by which all those we observe, are more or less modelled.

The most striking and formidable part of their general character is, the *contempt for religion*, which is so frequently and openly expressed. In all countries, there are men of a selfish and abstracted turn of mind, who are more disposed than others to religious argument and doubt; and in all, there are a greater number, whose worldly passions lead them to the neglect, or hurry them on to the violation of religious precepts: but a great nation, among whom a cool selfish regard to personal comfort and enjoyment, has been deliberately substituted for religious feeling, and where it is esteemed reasonable and wise to oppose and wrestle down, by metaphysical arguments, the natural and becoming sentiments of piety, as they arise in the human breast, is hitherto, and it is to be hoped will long continue, an anomaly in the history of mankind.

We heard it estimated at Paris, that 40,000 out of 600,000 inhabitants of that town attend church; one half of which number, they say, are actuated in so doing, by real sentiments of devotion; but to judge from the very small numbers whom we have ever seen attending the regular servi e in any of the

churches, we should think this proportion greatly overrated. Of those whom we have seen there, at least two-thirds have been women above fifty, or girls under fifteen years of age. In all catholic countries, Sunday is a day of amusement and festivity, as well as of religion—but it is generally also, one of relaxation from business: in Paris, we could see very little signs of the latter in the forenoons, but the amusements and dissipation of the capital were visibly increased in the evenings; and the Parisians have some reason for their remark, that their day of rest is changed to Monday, when the effect of their last night's dissipation wholly incapacitates them for exertion.

It is clear, that it is quite absurd to attempt altering the manner of spending the Sundays at Paris, while the sentiments of the people, in regard to religion, continue such as at present; but it must be admitted on the other hand, that their habits, as to the way of spending Sundays, re-act powerfully on their sentiments; and that the minds of the lower orders, in particular, are much debased by the want of what have been emphatically called "these precious "breathing times for the labouring part of the com-"munity."

Frenchmen of the higher ranks seem, at present, generally disposed to wave the subject of religion; but those of the middling ranks, by whom the business of the country is mainly carried on, do not scruple to express their contempt of it;—they applaud with enthusiasm all irreligious sentiments in

the theatres, and seldom mention priests, of any persuasion, without the epithet *sacrès.*

We were informed in Holland, that the Frenchmen who were sent to that country in official capacities, military or civil, manifested on all occasions, the utmost contempt for religion. A French General, quartered in the house of a respectable gentleman in Amsterdam, enquired the reason, the first Sunday that he was there, of the family going out in their best clothes; and being told they were going to church, he expressed his surprise, saying,—" Now that you are a part of the great " nation, it is time for you to have done with that " nonsense."

To an Englishman who has been accustomed to see the ordinances of religion regularly observed by the great majority of his countrymen, the neglect of them by the French people appears very singular, and even unnatural. When we afterwards visited Flanders, and observed the manifest respect of the people for religion—when we saw the numberless handsome churches in the villages, and the frequent religious processions in the streets of the towns—when we entered the Great Cathedral at Antwerp, and found vast numbers of people, of both sexes, and all ranks and ages, on their knees, engaged with the appearance of sincere devotion, in the solemn and striking service of vespers, we could not help saying among ourselves, that this people, for better reasons than mere political convenience, deserved to be separated from the French.

Yet we do not mean to say, that the French are wholly, or even generally devoid of religious feeling; on the contrary, we believe it may often be seen to break out in a very striking manner, even in the conversation of those who are accustomed to think it wise to express contempt for it. A Frenchman, full of enthusiasm about the glory of his country, who was talking to us of the deeds and sufferings of the French army in Russia, concluded his description of the latter with these emphatic words: "Ah! Monsieur, C'est ne pas les Russes; C'est *le bon Dieu* qui a fait cela."

In point of *intellectual ability*, the French are certainly inferior to no other nation. They have not, perhaps, so frequently as others, that cool, sound judgment in matters of speculation which can fit them for unravelling with success the perplexities of metaphysics; but their unparalleled success in mathematical pursuits is the best possible proof of the accuracy and quickness of their reasoning powers, when confined within due bounds. We do not refer to the astonishing efforts of such men as d'Alembert or La Place, but to the general diffusion of mathematical knowledge among all who receive a scientific education. We have heard it stated, by one perfectly qualified to judge of this matter, that a smart lad of 17, who has completed his education at the Ecole Polytechnique, would puzzle, in some branches of mathematics, almost any Professor in Britain. Unless a man makes

discoveries of his own in mathematics, he is little thought of as a mathematician by the men of science at Paris, even although he may be intimately versed in all the branches of that science as it stands.

Under the Imperial Government, it was not considered safe to cultivate any sciences which relate to politics or morals; but the advancement of the physical and mathematical sciences in France during that time, sufficiently indicates that there has been no want of talents or industry.

It may be remarked as a striking characteristic of the French scientific works, that they are almost always well arranged, and the meaning of the author fully and unequivocally expressed. A Frenchman does not always take a comprehensive view of his subject, but he seldom fails to take a clear view of it. The same turn of mind may be observed in the conversation of Frenchmen; even when their information is defective they will very generally arrest attention, by the apparent order and perspicuity of their thoughts; and they never seem to know what it is to be at a loss for words.

Considering the great ingenuity and ability of the French, it seems not a little surprising that they should be so much behind our countrymen in useful and profitable arts, and that Englishmen should be so much struck with the apparent poverty of the greater part of France. This is in a great measure owing, no doubt, to the policy of the late French Government, which has directed all the energies of the nation towards military affairs; and to the abuses

of the former government—but we think it must be ascribed in part to the character of the people. There is not the same co-operation of different individuals to one end, of private advantage and public usefulness; the same division of labour, intellectual as well as operative; the same hearty confidence between man and man, in France, as in England. Men of talents in France are, in general, too much tainted with the national vanity, and too much occupied with their own fame, to join heartily in promoting the public interest. Individual intelligence, activity, and ingenuity, go but little way in making a nation wealthy and prosperous, if they are made to minister only to the individual pleasures and *glory* of their possessors.

The *patriotism* of the French is certainly a very strong feeling, but it appears to be much tainted with the same vanity and love of shew that we have just remarked. There can be no doubt, that during the time of Bonaparte's successes, he commanded, in a degree that no other Sovereign ever did, the admiration and respect of the great body of the people; and it is equally certain, that he did this without interesting himself at all in their happiness. His hold of them was by their national vanity alone. They assent to all that can be said of the miseries which he brought upon France; but add, "Mais il a battu tout le monde; il a fait des choses "superbes a Paris; il a flattè notre orgeuil national. Ah! C'est un grand homme. Notre pays n'a ja-

"mais etè si grand ni si puissant que sous lui." The condition of the inhabitants of distant provinces was nowise improved by his public buildings and decorations at their capital; but every Frenchman considers a compliment to Paris, to the Louvre, to the Palais Royal, or to the Opera, as a personal compliment to himself.

At this moment, it is certainly a very general wish in France, to have a sovereign, who, as they express it, has grown out of the revolution; but when we enquire into their reason for this, it will often be found, we believe, to resolve itself into their national vanity. It is not that they think the Bourbons will break their word, or that the present Constitution will be altered without their consent; but after five and twenty years of confusion and bloodshed, they cannot bear the thoughts of leaving off where they began; and they think, that taking back their old dynasty without alteration, is practically acknowledging that they have been in the wrong all the time of their absence. We have often remarked (but we presume the remark is applicable to all despotic countries) that the French political conversation, such as is heard at caffés and tables d'hôte, is much more *personal* than that to which we are accustomed in England.

The character that appears to be most wanted in France, is that of disinterested public-spirited individuals, of high honour and integrity, and of large possessions and influence, who do not interfere in public affairs from views of ambition, but from a

sense of duty—who have no wish to dazzle the eyes of the multitude, and do not seek for a more extensive influence than that to which their observation and experience entitle them. While this character continues so much more frequent in our own country than among the French, it is perhaps in military affairs only that we need entertain any fear of their superiority. Englishmen of power and influence, generally speaking, have really at heart the *good* of their country, whereas Frenchmen, in similar situations, are chiefly interested in the *glory* of theirs.

It must also be observed, that public affairs occupy much less of the attention, and interfere much less with the happiness, of the majority of the French than of the English. There is less anxiety about public measures, and less gratitude for public services. We were often surprised at the indifference of the citizens of Paris with regard to their Marshals, whom they seldom knew by name, and did not seem to care for knowing. The peroration of an old lady, who had delivered a long speech to a friend of ours, then a prisoner at Verdun, lamenting the reverses of the French arms, and the miseries of France, was characteristic of the nation: "Mais, "c'est egal. Je suis toujours ici."

It is quite unnecessary for us to give proofs of the laxity of *moral principle* which prevails so generally among the French. The world has not now to learn, that notwithstanding their high professions, they have but little regard either for truth or for morality.

According to Mr Scott, "they have, in a great measure, detached words from ideas and feelings; they can, therefore, afford to be unusually profuse of the better sort of the first; and they experience as much internal satisfaction and pride when they profess a virtue as if they had practised one." Perhaps it would be more correct to say, that they have detached ideas and feelings from their corresponding actions. Their feelings have always been too violent for the moment, and too short in their duration, to influence their conduct steadily and permanently; but at present, they seem much disposed to think, that it is quite enough to have the feelings, and that there is no occasion for their conduct being influenced by them at all.

They appear to have a strong natural sense of the beauty and excellence of virtue; but they are accustomed to regard it merely as a sense. It does not regulate their conduct to others, but adds to their own selfish enjoyments. They speak of virtue almost uniformly, not as an object of rational approbation and imitation, and still less as a rule of moral obligation, but as a matter of feeling and taste. A French officer, who describes to you in the liveliest manner, and with all the appearance of unfeigned sympathy, the miseries and devastations occasioned by his countrymen among the unoffending inhabitants of foreign states, proceeds in the same breath, to declaim with enthusiastic admiration on the untarnished honour of the French arms, and the great mind of the Emperor. A Parisian tradesman, who

goes to the theatre that he may see the representation of integrity of conduct, conjugal affection and domestic happiness, and applauds with enthusiasm when he sees it, shews no symptoms of shame when detected in a barefaced attempt to cheat his customers; spends his spare money in the Palais Royal, and sells his wife or daughter to the highest bidder.

Another striking feature of the French character, connected with the preceding, is the openness, and even eagerness, with which they communicate all their thoughts and feelings to each other, and even to strangers. All Frenchmen seem anxious to make the most in conversation, not only of whatever intellectual ability they possess, but of whatever moral feelings they experience on any occasion;—they do not seem to understand why a man should ever be either ashamed or unwilling to disclose any thing that passes in his mind;—they often suspect their neighbours of expressing sentiments which they do not feel, but have no idea of giving them credit for feelings which they do not express.

The French have many *good qualities*; they are very generally obliging to strangers, they are sober and good-tempered, and little disposed to quarrel among themselves, and have an amiable cheerfulness of disposition, which supports them in difficulties and adversity, better than the resolutions of philosophy. But it is clear that they have very little esteem for virtuous characters; and in fact, it is not going too far to say, that a certain propriety of external demeanour has completely taken the place of

correctness of moral conduct among them. They speak almost uniformly with much abhorrence of drunkenness, and of all violations of the established forms of society; and such improprieties are very seldom to be seen among them. Many Frenchmen, as was already observed, are rough and even ferocious in their manners; and the language and behaviour of most of them, particularly in the presence of women, appears to us very frequently indelicate and rude; yet there are limits to this freedom of manner which they never allow themselves to pass. Go where you will in Paris, you will very seldom see any disgusting instances of intoxication, or any material difference of manner, between those who are avowedly unprincipled and abandoned, and the most respectable part of the community. In the caffés, which correspond not only to the coffeehouses, but to the taverns of London, you will see modest women, at all hours of the day, often alone, sitting in the midst of the men. In the Palais Royal, at no hour of the night do you witness scenes of gross indecency or riot.

To an Englishman, it often serves as an excuse for vicious indulgences, that he is led off his feet by temptation. To a Frenchman, this excuse is the only crime; he stands in no need of an apology for vice; but it is necessary "qu'il se menage:" he is taught "qu'un pechè cache est la moitie pardonnè;" he must on no account admit, that any temptation can make him lose his recollection or presence of mind.

We ought perhaps to admit likewise, that some of

the vices common among the French, are not merely less foul and disgusting in appearance, but less odious in their own nature, than those of our countrymen. We do not say this in palliation of their conduct. It is rather to be considered as a benevolent provision of nature, that in proportion as vice is more generally diffused, its influence on individual character is less fatal. This remark applies particularly to the case of women. A woman in England, who loses one virtue, knows that she outrages the opinion of mankind; she disobeys the precepts of her religion, and estranges herself from the examples which she has been taught to revere; she becomes an outcast of society; and if she has not already lost, must soon lose all the best qualities of the female character. But a French woman, in giving way to unlawful love, knows that she does no more than her mother did before her; if she is of the lower ranks, she is not necessarily debarred from honest occupation; if of the higher, she loses little or nothing in the estimation of society; if she has been taught to revere any religion, it is the Catholic, and she may look to absolution. Her conduct, therefore, neither implies her having lost, nor necessarily occasions her losing, any virtue but one; and during the course of the revolution, we have understood there have been many examples proving, in the most trying circumstances, that not even the worst corruptions of Paris had destroyed some of the finest virtues which can adorn the sex. "Elles ont toujours "bons cœurs," is a common expression in France, in

speaking even of the lowest and most degraded of the sex. In Paris, it is certainly much more difficult than in London to find examples in any rank of the unsullied purity of the female character; but neither is it commonly seen so utterly perverted and degraded; one has not occasion to witness so frequently the painful spectacle of youth and beauty brought by one rash step to infamy and wretchedness; and to lament, that the fairest gifts of heaven should become the bitterest of curses to so many of their possessors.

Having mentioned the French women, we think we may remark, without hazarding our character as impartial observers, that most of the faults which are so well known to prevail among them, may be easily traced to the manner in which they are treated by the other sex. It is a very common boast in France, that there is no other country in which women are treated with so much respect; and you can hardly gratify any Frenchman so much, as by calling France "le paradis des femmes." Yet, from all that we could observe ourselves, or learn from others, there appears to be no one of the boasts of Frenchmen which is in reality less reasonable. They exclude women from society almost entirely in their early years; they seldom allow them any vote in the choice of their husbands: After they have brought them into society, they seem to think that they confer a high favour on them, by giving them a great deal of their company, and paying them a great deal of at-

tention, and encouraging them to separate themselves from the society of their husbands. In return for these obligations, they often oblige them to listen to conversation, which, heard as it is, from those for whom they have most respect, cannot fail to corrupt their minds as well as their manners; and they take care to let them see that they value them for the qualities which render them agreeable companions for the moment; not for the usefulness of their lives, for the purity of their conduct, or the constancy of their affections. Surely the respect with which all women, who conduct themselves with propriety, are treated in England merely on account of their sex; the delicacy and reserve with which in their presence conversation is uniformly conducted by all who call themselves gentlemen, are more honourable tokens of regard for the virtues of the female character, than the unmeaning ceremonies and officious attentions of the French.

To the influence of the causes we have noticed, we believe it to be owing, that women of all ranks in France are destitute of that native self-respecting dignity of appearance and manner, claiming respect and attention as a right, rather than soliciting them as a boon; and giving you to understand, that the man who does not give them is disgraced, rather than the woman who does not receive them,—which have long distinguished the female inhabitants of our own country. And to a similar influence of the tastes and sentiments of our own sex, it is easy to re-

fer the more serious faults of the female character in France.

On the other hand, the better parts of the character of the French women are all their own. It is not certainly from the men that they have learnt those truly feminine qualities, that interesting humility and gentleness of manner, that pleasing gaiety of temper, and native kindness of disposition, to which it is very difficult, even for the proverbial coldness of northern critics, to apply terms of ridicule or reproach.

It is not easy for a stranger, in forming his opinion of the moral character of a people, to make allowance for the modification which moral sentiments undergo, in consequence of long habits, and adventitious circumstances. There is no quality which strikes a stranger more forcibly, in the character of the French, of the middling and lower ranks, than their seeming dishonesty, particularly their uniformly endeavouring to extract more money for their goods or their services than they know to be their value. But we think too much stress has been laid on this part of their character by some travellers. It is regarded in France as a sort of professional accomplishment, without which it is in vain to attempt exercising a trade; and it is no more thought to indicate immorality of any kind, than the obviously false expressions which are used in the ordinary intercourse of society in England, or the license of denying oneself to visitors. An Englishman is apt to pronounce

every man a scoundrel, who, in making a bargain, attempts to take him in; but he will often find, on a closer and more impartial examination, that the judgment formed by this circumstance alone, in France, is quite erroneous. One of our party entered a small shop in the Palais Royal to buy a travelling cap. The woman who attended in it, with perfect effrontery, asked 16 francs for one which was certainly not worth more than six, and which she at last gave him for seven. Being in a hurry at the time, he inadvertently left on the counter a purse, containing 20 gold pieces of 20 francs each. He did not miss it for more than an hour: on returning to the shop, he found the old lady gone, and concluded at first, that she had absented herself to avoid interrogation; but to his surprise, he was accosted immediately on entering, by a pretty young girl, who had come in her place, with the sweetest smile imaginable,—"Monsieur a oubliè sa bourse—que nous "sommes heureuses de la lui rendre."

It is certainly incorrect to say, that the *taste* of the French is decidedly superior to that of other nations. Their poetry, on the whole, will not bear a comparison with the English; their modern music is not nearly so beautiful as their ancient songs, which have now descended to the lower ranks; their painting is in a peculiar and not pleasing style; their taste in gardening is antiquated and artificial; their architecture is only fine where it is modelled on the ancient; their theatrical tastes, if they are more correct than ours, are also more limited. We have al-

ready taken occasion more than once to reprobate the general taste of the French, as being partial to art, and brilliant execution, rather than to simplicity and beautiful design.

But what distinguishes the French from almost every other nation, is the *general diffusion* of the taste for the fine arts, and for elegant amusements, among all ranks of the people. Almost all Frenchmen take not only a pride but an interest, in the public buildings of Paris, and in the collections of paintings and statues. There is a very general liking for poetry and works of imagination among the middling and lower ranks; they go to the theatres, not merely for relaxation and amusement, but with a serious intention of cultivating their taste, and displaying their critical powers. Many of them are so much in the habit of attending the theatres when favourite plays are acted, that they know almost every word of the principal scenes by heart. All their favourite amusements are in some measure of a refined kind. It is not in drinking clubs, or in sensual gratifications alone, that men of these ranks seek for relaxation, as is too often the case with us; but it is in the society of women, in conversation, in music and dancing, in theatres and operas, and caffés and promenades, in seeing and being seen; in short, in scenes resembling, as nearly as possible, those in which the higher ranks of all nations spend their leisure hours.

While the useful arts are comparatively little advanced, those which relate to ornaments alone are very generally superior to ours; and the persons who

profess these arts, speak of them with a degree of fervour that often seems ludicrous. "Monsieur," says a perruquier in the Palais Royal, with the look of a man who lets you into a profound secret in science, "Notre art est un art imitatif; en effet, "ce'st un des beaux arts;" then taking up a London-made wig, and twirling it round on his finger, with a look of ineffable contempt, "Celui ci n'est "pas la belle nature, mais voici la mienne,—ce'st la "nature personifiée!"

One of the best proofs of the tastes of the lower ranks being, at least in part, cultivated and refined, is to be found in the songs which are common among the peasantry and soldiers. There are a great number of these, and some of them, in point of beauty of sentiment, and elegance of expression, might challenge a comparison even with the admired productions of our own land of song. We take the following, almost without selection, our attention having been drawn to them by the beauty of the music. The first is part of a song which was written in April 1814, and set to the beautiful air of Charles VII. It was popular among the description of persons to whom it relates; and the young man from whom we got it had himself returned home, after serving in the young guard.

LE RETOUR DE L'AMANT FRANCAIS.

De bon cœur je pose les armes;
Adieu le tumulte des camps,

L'amitiè m'offre d'autres charmes,
Au sein de mes joyeux parents;
Le Dieu des Amants me rapelle,
C'est pour m'enroler à son tour;
Et je vais aupres de ma belle,
Servir sous les lois de l'amour.

Aux noms d'honneur et de patrie,
On m'a vu braver le trepas;
Aujourd'hui pour charmer ma vie
La paix fait cesser les combats.
Le Dieu des Amants, &c.

The next is a favourite song in the French army; one of our party heard it sung by a party of soldiers who were on their return to their homes from the campaign of Moscow.

LA CENTINELLE.

L'Astre de nuit dans son paisible eclat
Lanca ses feux sur les tentes de la France,
Non loin de camp un jeune et beau soldat
Ainsi chantoit appuyè sur sa lance.

"Allez, volez, zephyrs joyeux,
Portez mes vœux vers ma patrie,
Dites que je veille dans ces lieux,
Que je veille dans ces lieux,
C'est pour la gloire et pour m'amie.

L'Astre de jour r'animera le combat,
Demain il faut signaler ma valence;
Dans la victoire on trouve le trepas,
Mais si je meurs au coté de ma lance,—

Volez encore, zephyrs joyeux,
Portez mes regrets vers ma patrie,
Dites que je meurs dans ces lieux,
Que je meurs dans ces lieux,
C'est pour la gloire et pour m'amie."

After all that we had heard, and all that is known over the whole world, of the unbridled licentiousness and savage ferocity of the French soldiers, we were not a little surprised to find, that songs written in good taste, and expressing sentiments of a kind of chivalrous devotion and refinement, were popular in their ranks. Of the prevalence of a similar taste in poetry among the lower orders of the peasantry, the following fragment of an old ballad, still very popular among the peasantry of Provence, may be given as an instance.

LE TROUBADOUR.

Un gentil Troubadour
Qui chant et fait la guerre,
Revenait chez son Pere
Revant a son amour.

Gages de sa valeur
Suspendus en echarpe,
Son epèe et sa harpe
Croisaient sur son cœur.

Il rencontre en chemin
Pelerine jolie
Qui voyage et qui prie
Un rosaire a la main.
Colerette aux longs plies
Couvre sa fine taille,
Et grand chapeau de paille
Cache son front divin.

" Ah! gentil Troubadour,
Si tu reviens fidele,
Chant un couplet pour celle
Qui benit ton retour."
" Pardonnez mon refus,
Pelerine jolie,
Sans avoir vu m'amie,
Je ne chanterai plus."

" Ne la revois tu pas—
Oh Troubadour fidele,
Regarde la—C'est elle,
Ouvre lui donc tes bras.
Priant pour notre amour
J'allois en pelerine
A la vierge divine
Demander son secours."

The last peculiarity in the French character

which we shall notice, is perhaps the most fundamental of the whole; it is their love of mixed society; of the society of those for whom they have no regard, but whom they meet on the footing of common acquaintances. This is the favourite enjoyment of almost every Frenchman: to shine in such society, is the main object of his ambition; his whole life is regulated so as to gratify his desire. He is indifferent about comforts at home—he dislikes domestic society—he hates the retirement of the country; but he loves, and is taught to love, to figure in a large circle of acquaintance, for whom he has not the least heartfelt friendship, but with whom he is on the same terms as with perfect strangers, after the first half hour. If he has acquired a reputation in science, arts, or arms, so much the better, his *glory* will be of much service to him; if not, he must make it up by his conversation.

In consequence of the predilection of the French for social intercourse of this kind, it is, that knowledge of such kinds, and to such an extent, as can be easily introduced into conversation, is very general; that the opportunities of such intercourse are carefully multiplied; that all arts which can add to the attractions of such scenes are assiduously improved; that liveliness of disposition is prized beyond all other qualities, while those eccentricities of manner, which seem to form a component part of what we call humorous characters are excluded; that even childish amusements are preferred to solitary occupations; that taste is cultivated more than

morality, wit esteemed more than wisdom, and vanity encouraged more than merit.

It is easy to trace the pernicious effects of a taste for society of this kind, on individual character, when it is encouraged to such a degree as to become a serious occupation, instead of a relaxation to the mind. When the main object of a man's life is distinction among his acquaintances, from his wit—his liveliness—his elegance of taste—his powers of conversation—or even from the fame he may have earned by his talents; he becomes careless about the love of those with whom he is on more intimate terms, and who do not value him exclusively, or even chiefly for such qualities. His domestic affections are weakened; he lives in himself, and enjoys the present moment without either reflection or foresight: with outward appearance of an open friendly disposition, he becomes, in reality, selfish and interested; he learns to value his moral feelings, as well as his intellectual powers, chiefly for the sake of the display which he can make of them in society; and to reprobate vice, rather on account of its outward deformity, than of its intrinsic guilt; gradually he becomes impatient of restraints on the pleasure which he derives from social intercourse; and the religious and moral principles of his nature are sacrificed to the visionary idol to which his love of pleasure and his love of *glory* have devoted him.

Such appears to be the state of the minds of most Parisians. They have been so much accustomed to pride themselves on the outward appearance

of their actions, that they have become regardless of their intrinsic merits; they have lived so long for *effect*, that they have forgotten that there is any any other principle of action, by which their lives can be regulated.

Of the devotion of the French to the sort of life to which we refer, the best possible proof is, their fondness for a town life; the small number of chateaux in the country that are inhabited—and the still more remarkable scarcity of villas in the neighbourhood of Paris, to which men of business may retire. There are a few houses of this description about Belleville and near Malmaison; but in general, you pass from the noisy and dirty Fauxbourgs at once into the solitude of the country; and it is quite obvious, that you have left behind you all the scenes in which the Parisians find enjoyment. The contrast in the neighbourhood of London, is most striking. It is an easy matter to laugh at the dulness and vulgarity of a London citizen, who divides his time between his counting-house and his villa, or at the coarseness and rusticity of an English country squire; but there is no description of men to whom the national character of our country is more deeply indebted.

It seems no difficult matter to ascribe most of the differences which we observe between the English and French character to the differences in the habits of the people, occasioned by form of government and various assignable causes: and the French character, in particular, has very much the appear-

ance of being moulded by the artificial form of society which prevails among the people. Yet it is not easy to reconcile such explanations with the instances we can often observe, of difference of national character manifested under circumstances, or at an age, when the causes assigned can hardly have operated. The peculiarities which appear to us most artificial in the Parisian character and manners, may often be seen in full perfection in very young children. Every little French girl, almost from the time when she begins to speak, seems to place her chief delight in attracting the regard of the other sex, rather than in playing with her female companions. " In England," says Chateaubriand, " girls are sent to school in their earliest " years: you sometimes see groups of these little " ones, dressed in white mantles, with straw hats " tied under the chin with a ribband, and a basket " on the arm, containing fruit and a book—all with " downcast eyes, blushing when looked at. When I " have seen," he continues, " our French female chil" dren dressed in their antiquated fashion, lifting up " the trains of their gowns, looking at every one with " effrontery, singing love-sick airs, and taking les" sons in declamation; I have thought with regret, " of the simplicity and modesty of the little Eng" lish girls."

It is the opinion of some naturalists, that the acquired habits, as well as the natural instincts of animals, are transmitted to their progeny; and in comparing the causes commonly

assigned, and plausibly supported, for the peculiarities of national character, with the very early age at which these peculiarities shew themselves, one is almost tempted to believe, that something of the same kind may take place in the human species.

In what has now been said, no reference has been made to the influence of the revolution on the parts of the French character on which we have touched. On this point we have not, of course, the means of judging with precision; but most of the peculiarities which appeared to us most striking certainly existed before the revolution, and we should be disposed to doubt whether the leading features are materially altered. The influence of the writings of the French philosophers on the religious and moral principles of their countrymen has certainly been very great, and has been probably strengthened, rather than weakened, by the events of the last twenty-five years.

The general diffusion of a military spirit; the unprincipled manner in which war has been conducted, and the encouragement which has been given to martial qualities, to the exclusion of all pacific virtues, have promoted the growth of the French military vices, particularly selfishness and licentiousness, among all ranks and descriptions of the people, and materially injured their general character, even in the remotest parts of the country. During the revolution, and under the Imperial Government, men have owed

their success, in France, almost exclusively to the influence of their intellectual abilities, without any assistance from their moral character; the contempt for religion, therefore, is more generally diffused, and more openly expressed than it was; and although loud protestations of inviolable honour are still necessary, integrity of conduct is much less respected. The abolition of the old, and the formation of a new nobility, composed chiefly of men who had risen from inferior military situations, has had a most pernicious effect on the general manners of the nation. The chief or sole use of a hereditary nobility in a free country, is to keep up a standard of dignity and elegance of manner, which serves as a model of imitation much more extensively than the middling and lower ranks are often willing to allow, and has a more beneficial effect on the national character than it is easy to explain on mere speculative principles. But the manners of the new French nobility being the very reverse of dignified or elegant, their constitution has hitherto tended only to confirm the changes in the general manners of a great proportion of the French nation, which the revolutionary ideas had effected. There are very few men to be seen now in France, who (making all allowances for difference of previous habits) appear to Englishmen to possess either the manners or feelings of gentlemen.

The best possible proof that this is not a mere national prejudice, in so far as the army is concerned, is, that the French *ladies* are very generally of

the same way of thinking. After the English officers left Toulouse in the summer of 1814, the ladies of that town found the manners of the French officers who succeeded them so much less agreeable, that they could not be prevailed on, for a long time, to admit them into their society. This is a triumph over the arms of France, which we apprehend our countrymen would have found it much more difficult to achieve in the days of the ancient monarchy.

On the other hand, it must be admitted, that the revolution has had the effect of completely removing from the French character that silly veneration for high rank, unaccompanied by any commanding qualities of mind, which used to form a predominant feature in it. Yet it seems doubtful whether the equivalent they have obtained is more likely to promote their happiness. They have now an equally infatuated admiration for ability and success, without integrity or virtue. Their minds have been delivered from the dominion of rank without talents, and have fallen under that of talents without principle.

CHAPTER VII.

PARIS—THE THEATRES.

It is difficult for any person who has never quitted England to enter into the feelings which every one must experience when he first finds it in his power to examine those peculiarities of national manners, or national taste in the people of other states, which have been long the subject of speculation in his own country, and on his imperfect knowledge of which, much perhaps of the estimate he has formed of the character of those nations may depend. The circumstance which, perhaps of all others, connected with the people of France is most likely to create this feeling of curiosity and interest, is the opportunity of attending the French theatres. In most countries, and even in some where dramatic re-

presentations possess much greater power over the minds of the audience, the theatre is comparatively of much less importance to a stranger in assisting him to judge of the character of the people; the observations which he may collect can seldom be of any great use in affording him means of understanding their manners and public character, and at the most, cannot inform him of those circumstances in the character of the people with which their happiness and prosperity are connected;—but the theatre at Paris is an object of the greatest interest to a stranger; every one knows how strikingly the character and dispositions of the French people are displayed at their theatres; and at the period when we were there, as every speech almost contained something which was eagerly turned into an allusion to the circumstances of their situation, and to the events which had so lately taken place, the interest which the theatres must at any time have excited, was then greatly increased.

There was another object also, less temporary in its nature, which induced frequent attendance at the theatre, one of the most useful and instructive occupations of our time. The construction and character of the French tragedies have been as generally questioned in other countries as they are universally and enthusiastically admired in France; and with whatever feelings, whether of pleasure or fatigue, we might have read these celebrated compositions, we were all naturally most anxious to ascertain how far they were calculated for

actual representation, and what effect these plays, which possess such influence over the French people, might produce on those who had been accustomed to dramatic writings of so very different a description.

The theatres present, at first view, a very favourable aspect of French character. The audience uniformly conduct themselves with propriety and decorum; they are always attentive to the piece represented, and shew themselves, in general, very good judges of theatrical merit; and the entertainments which please their taste, are certainly of a superior order to a great part of those which are popular in England. A great number of the performances which are loudly applauded by the pit and boxes of the London theatres, would be esteemed low and vulgar, even by the galleries at the Theatre Français. It must be added, likewise, that the morality of the plays which are in request, is very generally more strict than of favourite English plays; and often of a refined and sentimental turn, which would be little relished in England. The tragedies acted at the Theatre Français, are generally modelled on the Greek; those of Racine and Voltaire are common. The comedies have seldom any low life or buffoonery, or vulgar ribaldry in them. The after pieces, and the ballets at the Academie de Musique, and at the Opera Comique, are often beautiful representations of rural innocence and enjoyments.

It appears, at first, difficult to reconcile this taste in theatrical entertainments with the well-known immorality of the Parisians, but, the fact is, that as

they are in the daily habit of speaking of virtues which they do not practise; so it never appears to enter their heads, that the sentiments which they delight in hearing at the theatres, ought to regulate their conduct to one another. They applaud them only for their adaptation to the situation of the fictitious personages; whereas, in England, they are applauded for speaking home to the business and bosoms of the audience.

"Among the French," says the intelligent and judicious author of the Caractere des Armeés Europiennes, "the seat of the passions is in the head— "they feel rather from the fancy than the heart— "their feelings are nothing more than thoughts."

The conduct and style of the French tragedies, in particular, appear to be very characteristic of a nation among whom noble and virtuous feelings are no sooner experienced than they are proclaimed to the world; and are there valued, rather for the selfish pleasure they produce in the mind, than for their influence on conduct. The French will not admit, in their tragedies, the representation of all the variety of character and conduct that can throw an air of truth and reality over dramatic fiction; they can admire such incidents and characters only, as accord with the sentiments and emotions which it is the peculiar province of tragedy to excite. They are not satisfied with the indication, in a few energetic words, valuable only as an index to the state of the mind, and an earnest of the actions of the speaker,—of feelings too strong to find vent at the

moment, in words capable of fully expressing them; they must have the full developement, the long detailed exposition of all the thoughts which crowd into the mind of the actor or sufferer, expanded, as it were, to prolong the enjoyment of those who are to sympathise with them, and expressed in select and appropriate terms, with the pomp and stateliness of heroic verse. An English tragedy is valued as a representation of life and character; a French tragedy as a display of eloquence and feeling: and the reason is, that in France eloquence and feeling are valued for their own sake, and in England they are valued for the sake of the corresponding characters and conduct.

It is perhaps one of the strongest arguments in favour of the general plan of the English drama, and one of the best proofs that dramatic poetry ought to be judged by very different principles from those by which other kinds of poetry are criticised, that one of the principal merits of the French actors consists in hiding the chief peculiarities of their own dramatic school. The personages in a French tragedy are represented by the authors as it were a degree above human nature; but the actors study to present themselves before the audience as simple men and *women*; the speeches are generally such as appear to be delivered by persons who are superior to the overwhelming influence of strong passions, and who can calmly enter into an analysis of their own feelings; but the actors labour to give you the impression, that they are agitated by present, violent, and sud-

den emotions; the tragedies are composed with as much regularity as epic poems in heroic verse, but the best actors do all in their power, by varied intonation, by irregular pauses, and frequent bursts of passion, to conceal the rhymes, and break the uniformity of the measure.

The effect of the rhymes and regular versification, in the mouths of the inferior actors, who have not the art to conceal them, is, to an English ear, at least, very unpleasing, and, indeed, almost destructive of theatrical illusion; and as a number of such actors must necessarily appear in every tragedy, it may be doubted whether a tragedy is ever acted throughout, on the French stage, in so pleasing a manner, at least to an English taste, as some of our English tragedies are at present in the London theatres—as Venice Preserved, for example, is now acted at Covent Garden. If such be our superiority, however, it must be ascribed, not to the tragic genius of the people being greater, but to there being fewer difficulties to be overcome on the English stage than on the French.

We think it is pretty clear, likewise, that the style of the best English tragedies affords a better field for the display of genius in the actors, than that of the French. Where the sentiments of the characters introduced are fully expressed, in their words—where their whole thoughts are detailed for the edification of the audience, however grand or touching those may be, it is obvious, that the actor who is to represent them is in trammels; the poet

has done so much, that little remains for him; his art is confined to the display of emotions or passions, all the variations of which are set down for him, and which he is not permitted to alter. But when the expression of intense feeling is confined to few words, to broken sentences, and sudden transitions of thought, which let you, indeed, into the inmost recesses of the soul of the sufferer, but do not lay it open before you; it is permitted for the genius of the actor to co-operate with that of the poet in producing an effect, for which neither was singly competent. Those who have witnessed the representation of the heart-rendings of jealousy in Kean's Othello, or of the agonies of love and sorrow joined, in Miss O'Neil's Belvidera, will, we are persuaded, acknowledge the truth of this observation.

The ideas which we had formed of the French stage, from reading their tragedies, had prepared us to expect, in their principal actor, a figure, countenance, and manner resembling those of Kemble, fitted to give full effect to the declamations in which they abound, and to the representation of characters of heroic virtue, elevated above the influence of earthly passions. The appearance of Talma is very different from this. He is a little man, rather fat, and his appearance and step has by no means the uniform dignity and majestic elevation of Kemble.

Difficult as it must always be to convey, by any general description, a distinct or adequate notion of the excellencies of any actor, there are some circumstances which it is common to mention, and some ex-

pressions which must be understood wherever the theatre is an object of interest, and the power of acting appreciated. Talma appears to us to *unite* more of the advantages of figure and countenance, and voice, than any *actor* that we have ever seen: it is not that his person is large and graceful, or even well proportioned; on the contrary, he is rather a short man, and is certainly not without defects in the shape of his limbs. But these disadvantages are wholly overlooked in admiration of his dignified and imposing carriage—of his majestic head—which recalls the remembrance of those models of the human frame which he has so deeply studied, and realises the beautiful description of the Arab, in Matilde—of his full and finely proportioned chest, which expresses so nobly the resolution, and manliness, and independence of the human character.

There is one circumstance in which Talma has every perfection which it is possible to conceive—in the power, and meekness, and beauty of his *voice*. It is one of those commanding and pathetic voices which can never, at any distance of time, be forgotten by any one who has once heard it: every variety of tone and expression of which the human voice is capable, is perfectly at his command, and succeed each other with a rapidity and power which it is not possible to conceive. It makes its way to the heart the instant it is heard, and at the moment he begins to speak, you feel not only your attention fixed, and your admiration excited, but the mind wholly subdued by its commanding influence, and disposed to

enter at once into every emotion which he may wish to produce. The beauty and feeling of his under tones; the affection, tenderness, and pity which they so exquisitely express, are so perfect, that no one could foresee in such perfections, the fierce, hurried, and overbearing tones of Hero—the voice of deep and exhausting suffering, which in Hamlet shews so profound an impression of the misery he had undergone, and of the hopelessness of the situation in which he is placed,—or still more the shriek of agony in Orestes, when he finds the horrors of madness again assailing him, and when in that utter prostration of soul, which the belief of inevitable and merciless destiny alone could produce in his mind, abandons himself in dark despair to the misery which seems to close round him for ever.

We have heard several English people describe Talma's countenance, as by no means powerful enough for a great actor; it appeared to us, that in no one respect was he so decidedly superior to any *actor* on the English stage, as in the admirable and various expression of which it is capable. There is one observation indeed regarding the acting of Talma, which has often suggested itself, and which may, in some degree, prepare us to expect, that English people in general could not be much struck with the expression of his countenance. On the English stage, it appears commonly to be the object of the actors, to give to every sentiment the whole effect of which the words of the part will admit, as fully as if that sentiment were the only one which could occupy the

mind of the character at the time; and any person who will attend to the manner in which Macbeth and Hamlet are performed, even by that great actor, whose genius has secured at once the pre-eminence which the reputation of Garrick had left so long incontested, may observe, that many of the parts, which are considered as the strongest proofs of the abilities of the actor, consist in the expression given to sentiments, undoubtedly of subordinate importance in the situation of these characters, and which probably could never occupy so much the mind of any one really placed in the circumstances represented in the play, and under the influence of the feelings which such circumstances are calculated to produce. In the character of Hamlet, in particular, there are several passages, in which it is the custom to express minor and temporary feelings with a keenness little suitable to the profound grief in which Hamlet ought to be absorbed at the commencement of the play, and which can be correct, only when the mind is free from other more powerful emotions. It appears to me, that the consistency of the character is much more judiciously and naturally preserved in the acting of Talma; that he is more careful to maintain, invariably, that unity of expression, which ought to be given to the character, and is more uniformly under the influence of those predominating feelings, which the circumstances of the situation in which the part has placed him seem fitted to excite. Under this impression, apparently of the object which an actor ought to

keep in view, Talma omits many opportunities, which would be eagerly employed on the English stage, to display the horror of the actor, while the natural consistency of the character is disregarded, and never seems to think it proper to express every sentiment with that effect which could be given to it, if the mind had nothing else at the moment to attend to but that sentiment. Much, no doubt, is lost by this notion of acting for stage effect. Many opportunities are passed over, which might have been employed to shew the manner in which the actor can represent a variety of feelings, which the language expresses; and we lose much of the art and skill of acting, when the character of the play is so uniformly pursued, and the circumstances of his situation so justly attended to.

But on the other hand, the impression which the character in this manner makes upon the mind, is on the whole much more profound, and the interest which the spectator takes in the circumstances in which that character is placed, is much greater when he appears so wholly under the influence of the feelings which his situation ought to excite, as to be incapable of that keenness about unimportant matters, which would be most unnatural in the circumstances in which he is represented. To those, therefore, accustomed to the greater variety of expression which the practice of the English stage renders necessary in the countenance of every actor, and to the strong and often exaggerated manner in which common sentiments and ordinary feelings are represented,

there may perhaps appear some want of expression in Talma's countenance; but no one can attend fully to any of the more interesting characters which he performs, without feeling an impression produced by the power and intelligence of his countenance, which no length of time will ever wholly efface. It is not the expression of his countenance at any particular moment which fixes itself on the mind, or the force with which accidental feelings are represented; but that permanent and powerful expression which suits the character he has to sustain, and never for an instant permits you to forget the circumstances, of whatever kind, in which he is placed; and those who have seen him in any of the greater parts on the French stage, can never forget that unrivalled power of expressing deep grief which constitutes so materially the force of theatrical delusion, and of which nothing in any English actor at present on the stage can afford an idea.

At the same time it must be admitted, that Talma has arrived at that time of life, when the hand of age has impaired, in some degree, the vigour and expression of the human frame, and when his countenance has lost much of that variety and play of expression which belongs to the period of youth alone; it has lost much of the warmth and keenness of youthful feeling, and probably might fail in expressing that openness, and gaiety, and enthusiasm, which time has so great a tendency to diminish. But these qualities are not often required in the parts which Talma has to perform in the French plays;

and if his countenance has lost some of the perfections of earlier years, it has, on the other hand, gained much from the seriousness and dignity of age. If, for instance, he does not express so well the ardour—the hope—the triumph of youthful love, there is yet something irresistibly affecting in the earnestness with which he expresses that passion; something which adds most deeply to the interest which its expression is calculated to excite, by reminding one of the instability of human enjoyment, and the many cruel events which may occur to destroy the visions of inexperienced affection. We have already mentioned, that in the expression of profound emotion and deep suffering, the countenance of Talma is altogether admirable; and we doubt whether there is any thing in this respect more true and perfect, even in the performance of that great actress who has, in the present day, united every perfection of grace, and beauty, and genuine feeling which the stage ever exhibited. But the countenance of Talma expresses not merely suffering, but, if possible, something more, which we never saw in any other actor. It alone expresses that *impatience* under suffering—that restless, constant wish for relief, which produces so strong an impression of the truth and reality of the affliction with which you are called upon to sympathise.

His attitudes and action are uncommonly striking, seldom in the exaggeration of the French stage, and never running into that immoderate expression of passion in which dignity of character is necessarily

sacrificed. Talma appears to understand the use and management of action better than any actor on the French stage; and though at times some prominent faults, inseparable, perhaps, from the character of the plays in which he is compelled to perform, may be observable; yet, in general, his action appears to possess a power and expression beyond what is attempted by any actor on the English stage.

Nothing can be conceived apparently so inconsistent with the character of the French plays, as the manner in which they are delivered. The harangues, which are tedious perhaps when read, would probably be most uninteresting and wearisome if pronounced with that unbending and uncompassionate declamation, which seems to suit their stately march and long resounding lines: to a French audience, in particular, such representations would be intolerable, and the actors have been compelled to perform them with a degree of energy and passion for which they were certainly never calculated, in order to awaken those emotions which it must be more or less the object of theatrical representations to excite, wherever they are to be performed to all classes of mankind. As might have been foreseen, the French actors, compelled to counterfeit a degree of warmth and feeling, which do not exist in the sentiments they utter, or the language they employ, have fallen very naturally into the error of making the expression of passion immoderately vehement; and not being guided and regulated by the language they are to use, have become not only indiscriminate in the energy

with which they act, but often run into a degree of warmth, totally destructive of every feeling of propriety and dignity.

The striking circumstance in Talma's acting is, that he alone seems to know how to act the French plays with all the feeling and interest which can be necessary to produce effect; and at the same time, to avoid that ranting and furious delivery which prevent those very emotions it is intended to awaken. The means by which the genius of this great actor has accomplished so important an effort, and overcome all the difficulties which seem insuperable to the rest of his countrymen, afford the best illustration which can be given of the talents and imagination he so powerfully displays. Talma appears to have thought, and most justly, that the only manner in which the French tragedies can approach and interest the heart, is by the impression which the characters—the distress and the moral tendency of the play, may, upon the whole, be able to produce, not by the force or pathos which can be thrown into any particular speeches, or by the effect with which parts of the tragedy only can be given. The manner in which any speech is to be delivered, or the degree of passion that ought to be thrown into it, he seems at all times to consider as of subordinate importance to the preservation of that permanent character, whether of intense and overpowering suffering, or wild desperation, by which he thinks the feelings of the spectators may be most deeply and heartily interested. On the English stage, that style of acting is altogether unknown, in

which, far from placing any importance upon the effect which many even of the principal speeches may produce; the character of profound grief is so completely sustained, that the very art of speaking seems an exertion too great for a mind, which suffering has nearly exhausted, and where, in consequence, the pomp and energy of declamation, and many of the most natural aids by which passion is wont to express itself, are all disregarded in the intensity of mental agony. It is not uncommon, accordingly, to see Talma perform parts of a tragedy in a manner which might seem tame and unmeaning to one who had not been present at the preceding parts, but which is most interesting to those who have seen the character which he adopts from the first, and feel the propriety and effect of the manner in which that character is sustained. Some of the most striking effects we have ever seen produced in any acting, are those scenes, in many of the plays, in which he performs, in which, from his powerful and affecting personation of character, his exhausted mind seems unable to enter into any events which are not either to relieve his sufferings, or terminate an existence which appears beset with such hopeless misery. Other actors may have succeeded in expressing as strongly the influence of present suffering, or the despair of intense grief. It is Talma alone who knows how to express, what is so much more grand, the effects of long suffering; to remind you of the misery he has endured by the spectacle of an exhausted frame and broken spirit;

and by exhibiting the overwhelming consequences of those sufferings which the part has not dared to describe, nor the actor ventured to represent, to interest the mind far more profoundly than any representation of present passion could possibly effect. The influence of the exertions of other actors is limited to the effects of the emotions they represent, and of the suffering they exhibit: the genius of Talma has imitated the efforts of ancient Greece in her matchless sculpture, and chosen as the proper field for the display of the actors powers, not the mere representation of excess in suffering, but that moment of greater interest, when the struggle of nature is past, and the mind has sunk under the pressure of affliction, which no fortitude could sustain, and which no train of hope had cheered.

Every one knows the peculiar manner in which, in general, the verses of the French tragedy are repeated, and the delight which the French people take in the uniform and balanced modulation of voice with which they are accompanied. In an ordinary actor, this peculiar tone is often, to many foreigners, extremely fatiguing, but it is defended in France, as securing a pleasure in some degree independent of the merits of the actor, and defending the audience from the harshness of tone, and extravagancies of accent, to which otherwise, in bad actors, they would be exposed; and certainly, no one can listen, in the National Theatre, to the beautiful and splendid declamations of the most celebrated compositions in French literature, delivered

in the manner which has been selected as best adapted to the character of the plays and the taste of the people, with any feeling of indifference. In the skilful hands of Talma, who preserves the beauty of the poetry nearly unimpaired in the very *abandon* of feeling, the structure and character of the French verse acquires beauties which it never before could boast, and loses all that is harsh or painful in the uniformity of its structure, or the monotony of artificial taste. The description which Le Baron de Grimm has given of Le Skain may be well applied to Talma. "Un talent plus precieux sans doute et qu'il avait porté au plus haut degré c'etait celui de faire sentir tout le charme des beaux vers *sans nuire jamais* à la verité de l'expression. En dechirant le cœur, il enchantait toujours l'oreille, sa voix pénétrait jusqu' au fond de l'ame, et l'impression qu'elle y faisait, semblable a celle du burin, y laissait *des traces* et des longs souvenirs."

The tragedy of Hamlet, in which we saw Talma perform for the first time, is one which must be interesting to every person who has any acquaintance with French literature; and it will not probably be considered as any great digression in a description of Talma's excellences, as an actor, to add some further remarks concerning that celebrated play in which his powers are perhaps most strikingly displayed, and which is one of the greatest compositions undoubtedly of the French theatre. It can hardly be called a translation, as many material alterations were made in the story of the play; and

though the general purport of the principal speeches has been sometimes preserved, the language and sentiments are generally extremely different. The character of Shakespeare's Hamlet was wholly unsuited to the taste of a French audience. What is the great attraction in that mysterious being to the feelings of the English people? The strange, wild and metaphysical ideas which his art or his madness seems to take such pleasure in starting, and the uncertainty in which Shakespeare has left the reader with regard to Hamlet's real situation, would not perhaps have been understood—certainly not admired, by those who were accustomed to consider the works of Racine and Voltaire as the models of dramatic composition. In the play of Denis, accordingly, Hamlet thinks, talks and acts pretty much as any other human being would do, who should be compelled to speak only in the verse of the French tragedy, which necessarily excludes, in a great degree, any great incoherence or flightiness of sentiment. In some respects, however, the French Hamlet, if a less poetical personage, is nevertheless a more interesting one, and better adapted to excite those feelings which are most within the command of the actor's genius. M. Denis has represented him as more doubtful of the reality of the vision which haunted him, or at least of the authority which had commissioned it for such dreadful communications; and this alteration, so important in the hands of Talma, was required on account of other changes which had been made in the story of the play. The

paramour of the Queen is not Hamlet's uncle, nor had the Queen either married the murderer or discovered her criminal connexion with him. Hamlet, therefore, has not, in the incestuous marriage of his mother, that strong confirmation of the ghost's communication, which, in Shakespeare, led him to suspect foul play even before he sees his father's spirit. In the French play, therefore, Hamlet is placed in one of the most dreadful situations in which the genius of poetry can imagine a human being. Haunted by a spirit; which assumes such mastery over his mind, that he cannot dispel the fearful impression it has made, or disregard the communication it so often repeats, while his attachment to his mother, in whom he reveals the parent he has lost, makes him question the truth of crimes which are thus laid to her charge, and causes him to look upon this terrific spectre as the punishment of unknown crime, and the visitation of an offended Deity. Denis has most judiciously and most poetically represented Hamlet, in the despair which his sufferings produce, as driven to the belief of an overruling destiny, disposing of the fate of its unhappy victims, by the most arbitrary and revolting arrangement, and visiting upon some, with vindictive fury, the whole crimes of the age in which they live. There is in this introduction of ancient superstition, something which throws a mysterious veil round the destiny of Hamlet, that irresistibly engrosses the imagination, and which must be doubly interesting in that country where the horrors of the revolution have ended in producing a

very prevalent though vague belief in the influence of fatality upon human character and human actions, among those who pretend to ridicule, as unmanly prejudice and childish delusion, the religion of modern Europe.

The struggle, accordingly, that appears to take place in Hamlet's mind is most striking; and when at last he yields to the authority and the commands of the spirit, which exercises such tyranny over his mind, it does not seem the result of any farther evidence of the guilt which he is enjoined to revenge, but as the triumph of superstition over the strength of his reason. He had *long resisted* the influence of that visionary being, which announced itself as his father's injured spirit, and in assuming that sacred form, had urged him to destroy the only parent whom fate had left; but the struggle had brought him to the brink of the grave, and shaken the empire of his reason; and when at last he abandons himself to the guidance of a power which his firmer nature had long resisted, the impression of the spectator is, that his mind has yielded in the struggle, and that, in the desperate hope of obtaining relief from present wretchedness, he is about to commit the most horrible crimes, by obeying the suggestions of a spirit, which he more than suspects to be employed only to tempt him on to perdition. No description can possibly do justice to the manner in which this situation of Hamlet is represented by Talma; indeed, on reading over the play some time afterwards, it was very evident that

the powers of the actor had invested the character with much of the grandeur and terror which seemed to belong to it, and that the imagination of the French poet, which rises into excellence, even when compared with the productions of that great master of the passions, whom he has not submitted to copy, has been surpassed by the fancy of the actor for whom he wrote. The Hamlet of Talma is probably productive of more profound emotion, than any representation of character on any stage ever excited: One other alteration ought to be mentioned, as it renders the circumstances of Hamlet's situation still more distressing, and affords Talma an opportunity of displaying the effects of one of the gentler passions of human nature, when its influence seemed irreconcileable with the stern and fearful duties which fate had assigned to him. The Ophelia of the French play, so unlike that beautiful and innocent being who alone seems to connect the Hamlet of Shakespeare with the feelings and nature of ordinary men, has been made the daughter of the man for whose sake the king has been poisoned, and was engaged to marry Hamlet at that happier period when he was the ornament of his father's court, and the hope of his father's subjects. In the first part of the play, though no hint of the terrible revenge which he was to execute on her father has escaped, the looks and anxiety of Talma discover to her that her fate is in some degree connected with the emotions which so visibly oppress him, and she makes him at last confess the insurmountable barrier which sepa-

rates them for ever. Nothing can be greater than the acting of Talma during this difficult scene, in which he has to resist the entreaties of the woman whom he loves, when imploring for the life of her father, and yet so overcome with his affection, as hardly to have strength left to adhere to his dreadful purpose.

The feelings of a French audience do not permit the spirit of Hamlet's father to appear on the stage, " l'apparition se passe, (says Madame de Stael*,) en entier dans la physionomie de Talma, et certes elle n'en est pas ainsi moins effrayante. Quand, au milieu d'un entretien calme et melancolique, tout a coup il aperçoit le spectre, on suit tout ses mouvemens dans les yeux qui le contemplent, et l'on ne peut douter de la presence du fantôme quand un tel regard l'atteste." The remark is perfectly just, nothing can be imagined more calculated to dispel at once the effect which the countenance of a great actor, in such circumstances, would naturally produce, than bringing any one on the stage to *personate the ghost*; and whoever has seen Talma in this part, will acknowledge that the mind is not disposed to doubt for an instant the existence of that form which no eye but his has seen, and of that voice, which no ear but his has heard.

But the soliloquy on death is the part in which the astonishing excellence and genius of Talma are

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* De l'Allemagne, tom 2d. 304.

most strikingly displayed. Whatever difficulty there may often be to determine the particular manner in which scenes, with other characters, *ought* to be performed, there is no difference of opinion as to the manner in which soliloquies *ought* in general to be delivered. How comes it then, that these are the very parts in which all feel that the powers of the actors are so much tried, and in which, for the most part, they principally fail? No one can have paid any attention to the English stage, without being struck with the circumstance, that while there may be much to praise in the performance of the other parts, many of the best actors uniformly fail in soliloquies, and that it is only of late, since the reputation of the English stage has been so splendidly revived, that we have seen these difficult and interesting parts properly performed. It is in this circumstance, more than any other, in which the talents of Talma are most remarkably displayed, because he is peculiarly fitted, by his complete personation of character, and the deep interest which he seems himself to take in the part he is sustaining, to excel in performing what chiefly requires such interest. He is, at all times, so fully impressed with the feelings, which, under such circumstances, must have been really felt, that one is uniformly struck with the truth and propriety of every thing he does; and of course, in soliloquies, which must be perfect, when the actor appears to be seriously and deeply interested in the subjects on which he is meditating, Talma invariably succeeds. In this soliloquy in

Hamlet, he is completely absorbed in the awful importance of the great question which occupies his attention, and nothing indicates the least consciousness of the multitude which surrounds him, or even that he is giving utterance to the mighty thoughts which crowd upon his mind. "Talma ne faisoit pas un geste, quelquefois seulement il remuoit la tête pour questioner la terre et le ciel sur ce que c'est que la mort! Immobile, la dignité de la méditation absorboit tout son etre."—De l'Allemagne, l. c. At the conclusion of this great tragedy, which has become so popular in Fraace, and in which the genius of Talma is so powerfully exhibited, the applause was universal; and after some little time, to my surprise, instead of gradually diminishing, became much louder; and presently a cry of Talma burst out from the whole house. In a few minutes, the curtain drew up, and discovered Talma waiting to win the applause with which they honoured him, and to express his sense of the distinction paid to him.

The part of Orestes in Andromaque, is another character in which the acting of Talma is seen to much advantage; and to a foreigner, it is peculiarly interesting, as it displays, more than any other almost, that uncommon power of recitation, which distinguishes his acting, from the lame and uniform declamation of the ordinary actors. The part is one which is remarkably popular at present in Paris, as there is something in the history of that fabulous being, who has been represented as the victim of a capricious and arbitrary Providence, and exposed

during his whole life, to the most unmerited and horrible torments, which seems greatly to interest the French people; and Talma has thus been led to bestow upon the character, a degree of reflection and preparation, which the parts in a French tragedy do not in general require. There is a passage which occurs in the first scene, which exhibits very strikingly the judgment and genuine feeling which uniformly marks his acting. After mentioning what had happened to him after his disappointment, with regard to Hermione, and his separation from Pylades, he says, that he had hastened to the great assembly of the Greeks, which the common interest of Greece had called together, in the hope, that the ardour, the activity, and the love of glory which had distinguished the période of youth might revive with the animating scene which was again presented to his mind.

En ce calme trompeur J'arrivai dans la Grece
Et Je trouvois d'abord ces princes rassemblès,
Qu'un peril assez grand sembloit avoir troublès.
J'y courus. Je pensai que la guerre et la gloire
De soins plus importants remplisoit ma memoire
Que mes sens reprenant leur premiere vigueur
L'amour acheveroit de sortir de mon cœur.
Mais admire avec mois le sort, dont la pursuite
Me fait courir alors au piege que j'evite.

There is a similar passage in Othello, in which, when the passion of jealousy had seized upon his mind, the Moor laments the degradation to which

he had fallen, when all the objects of his former ambition ceased to interest his imagination, or animate his exertions. In enumerating the occupations which formed the proud and glorious circumstance of war, but for which the misery of his situation had completely unmanned him, the actors who have attempted this character, fire with the description of the aims which he now abandons, and of the scenes in which his renown had been acquired. In this analogous passage, Talma repeats these scenes with much greater propriety and effect. He appeared overwhelmed by a deep sense of the degradation to which a foolish and unmanly attachment had reduced him; no gesture or tone of voice, expressive of the slightest animation, escaped him, when he described the objects of his youthful ambition; every thing denoted the shame and regret of a man who felt that his glory and his occupation was gone, and who no longer dared to look up with pride to the remembrance of those better days, when his valour and his resolution were the admiration of Greece.

The scene between Orestes and Hermione on their first meeting, is one in which Talma displays very great power: with his heart full of the passion from which he had suffered so much, he begins the declaration of his constancy in the most ardent and impressive manner, and for a time seems to flatter himself, that resentment at the neglect which she had met with from Pyrrhus might have awakened some affection for himself in the breast of Hermione. At first she is anxious to secure Orestes in

case that Pyrrhus should ultimately slight her, and is at pains to confirm the hope which she perceives that his passion had created: But when he urges her to take the opportunity which now offered itself, of leaving a court where she appeared to be detained only to witness the marriage of her rival, she betrays at once the state of her mind:—

> " Mais, seigneur, cependant s'il epouse Andromaque.
> *Oreste.* Hé, madame.
> *Her.* Songez quelle honte pour nous,
> Si d'une Phrygienne il devenoit l'epoux.
> *Oreste.* Et vous le haissez !"—&c.

The indignant and bitter irony with which Talma delivers this speech, when he finds that resentment at Pyrrhus, and not affection for himself, has made her thus anxious to rivet the chains which her former cruelty had hardly awakened, is most striking, and he seems at once to regain the independence which he had lost.

The last scene of this interesting tragedy is the most celebrated and most admired part in the range of Talma's characters, and undoubtedly it is impossible to find any acting more admirable or more affecting: After the death of Pyrrhus he rushes upon the stage to inform Hermione that he had obeyed her dreadful commission, and to receive the reward of such a proof of his attachment; the horror of the crime which he had committed is sunk in his confidence of the claim he has now acquired to her gratitude, and he triumphantly relates the

circumstances of the scene which had passed, as giving him such undeniable titles to the reward which had been promised to his firmness.—Madame de Stael has mentioned the effect he gives to the short and feeble reply which he makes, when Hermione accuses him of cruelty, and throws all the guilt of the murder on himself;—but it is in the subsequent part that he appears so great: After Hermione leaves him, and he recovers in some degree of the stupor which such an unexpected attack had produced, he repeats, in an hurried manner, the circumstances of his situation, and dwells on the perfidy of Hermione; but when he finds no palliation for his crime, and sees how completely he has been degraded by his unmanly weakness, the whole enormity of his guilt comes full upon his mind, and he acquires even dignity in the opinion of the beholder, from the solemn and emphatic manner in which he curses the folly and inhumanity of his conduct. But a further blow awaits him; and it is not till Pylades informs him of the death of Hermione, that the horrors of madness begin to seize on his mind. At first he remains motionless and thunderstruck with the dreadful issue of his enterprise; then, in a low and shrilling tone of voice, he laments the bitterness and misery of that destiny by which he is doomed to be for ever the victim of fate, (du malheur un modêle accompli,) till the wildness of madness comes over him: In a voice hardly heard, he seems to ask himself, "Quelle épaisse nuit tout a coup m'environne, de quelle coté sortir?

D'ou vient que je frissone. Quelle horreur me saisit?"—and at once a shock, dreadful beyond all description, announces the destruction of reason, and the agonies of madness. It is vain to describe the wild, desperate, and horrifying manner in which he represents Orestes tortured by the dreadful visions with which the furies had visited his mind, till his nature, exhausted by such intense sufferings, sinks at once into a calm, more dreadful even than the wildness which had preceded it.

These remarks have been extended so much beyond the limits which can be interesting to those who have never seen this unrivalled actor, and to whom they can convey so very inadequate a notion of his powers, that it is impossible to make any further observations, which his performance in other characters may have suggested. The most interesting character, perhaps, in which I saw him perform after these two, was Nero in Britannicus. Every person who has been in Paris, since the collection of statues was brought there, must have remarked the striking resemblance of Talma's countenance to the first busts of Nero; and this singular circumstance, along with the admirable manner in which he represents the impatient, headstrong, and profligate tyrant, rendered his acting in this character remarkably interesting. The opportunities which he enjoyed of studying the character and the manner of Bonaparte, who never forgot the assistance he received from Talma, when he first entered that city, where he was afterwards to govern with such

unbounded power, must have been present to his mind when he was preparing this difficult character; and if it is supposed that he must have been, even with this advantage, little able to imagine correctly the manner and deportment of so singular a character as the Roman emperor, none will question the competency of that extraordinary person, under whose tyranny Talma so long lived, to determine the manner which would best suit the character of Nero, and who, as Talma has often declared, did actually suggest many improvements in the manner in which he had first acted the part.

Mademoiselle Georges, the great tragic actress, was reckoned at one time the most beautiful woman in France. She is now grown very large, and her movements are, from that cause, stiff and constrained; but she is still a fine woman, and her countenance, though not very striking at first sight, is capable of wonderful variety and intensity of expression; her style of acting may be said to be intermediate between the matronly dignity and majestic deportment of Mrs Siddons, and the enchanting sweetness and feminine graces of Miss O'Neil. In the delineation of strong feelings and violent passions, of grief, madness, or despair, she will not suffer from comparison with either of these actresses; but we should doubt whether she can ever have inspired as much moral sympathy and admiration as the one has always commanded, by the elevation and grandeur of her representation of characters of exalted virtue, and the other daily wins, by the in-

teresting tenderness of her manner, by the truth and energy of her impassioned scenes, and the overpowering pathos of her distress.

The tragedy of Œdipe, by Voltaire, affords room for the display of the most characteristic qualities of both Talma and Mademoiselle Georges; and when we saw them act Œdipus and Jocasta, in this piece, we agreed that there were certainly no actor and actress, of equally transcendant merit, who act together in either of the London theatres. The distress of the play is of too horrible and repulsive a kind, we should conceive, to be ever admitted on the English stage, but it furnishes occasion for the display of consummate art in the imitation of the most terrible and overpowering emotions; and it is difficult to conceive a more powerful representation than they exhibited of the gloomy forebodings of suspicion, of the agonizing suspence of unsatisfied doubt, and the sickening pang of hope deferred—heightened, rather than diminished, by the consciousness of innocent *intention*, and the feeling of undeserved affliction, and giving way only to the certainty of irretrievable misery, and the frenzy of utter despair.

Regarding the character of the French tragedies, there will always be much difference of opinion; and many, probably, of those who have had the best opportunities of studying them, as performed upon the stage at Paris, may yet retain nearly the same judgment concerning them which they formed in reading

them in the closet. And I am willing to admit, that admirable as they appear to me in many respects, they are not well adapted to become popular in this country. But the excellences and unrivalled elegance of the French comedy, have been at all times universally admitted, while there is this great distinction between them and the tragedies of the French school, that however great the pleasure we may take in reading them, no one ever saw them well performed, without acknowledging, that until then, he had no conception of the astonishing field which they afford for the display of the actor's power, or of the innumerable charms which they possess as dramatic compositions.

Every thing that ever was amiable and engaging in the character of the French people; the elegance and *bon-homie* of their manners, which served as a passport to the French in every country in Europe, and softened the feelings of national resentment with which their ambition and their arrogance to other nations had taught many to regard them as a people; their well-known superiority to other nations in these circumstances, which render them agreeable and pleasant in society, in their constant attention and accommodation to the wishes and pursuits of others, in that anxiety to please, to entertain, and to promote the interests and happiness of others, which costs so little to those who are never subject to that unhappy irregularity of temper and spirit, so visible to all foreigners in the character of the English people, and which ne-

ver fails to secure esteem, and to interest the affections, while superior worth, less happily gifted for the common purposes and intercourse of life, may be regarded with no warmer feeling than that of distant respect; the *loyauté* and frankness once so closely associated with the history and character of the French people; the manliness which taught them at once to admit and to repair the wrongs which their impetuosity of spirit or their harshness of feeling might have occasioned, and the gallantry with which they were wont to defend with their sword what their honour bound them to maintain; and above all, that delightful and touching *abandon* of feeling, which seemed the result of genuine simplicity, and which appeared to know no reason, only because it knew no guilt; all these beautiful and interesting tints, which adorned the character of former and of later days, are still preserved in the comedies of their greater writers: the purity of former character seems to animate the pages which they write, and the spirit of earlier times seems yet to retain its ascendancy, when they wish to pourtray the manners of the present day.

In the degradation of the present period, they delight to recall the splendour and the renown of the period that is past, and by preserving in their works the character which adorned the French people before the profligacy and the insidious policy of a corrupt court disarmed the nation of its virtue, to reconcile it to slavery, to attempt to awaken a nobler spirit, and lay the foundation of future

grandeur. Whatever has delighted us in reading the history of the earlier periods of the French monarchy, when the elevation of chivalrous feeling, and the disinterestedness of simple manners distinguished the French people, and when the character of the great Henry displayed, in a more conspicuous station, the virtues which ennobled the duties of private life, is yet to be found in their best comedies. Among the many thousands who crowd to their numerous theatres, there are many, one would hope, who can feel the sad contrast which the last century of French history, "fertile only in crime," presents to the honour of former times, and in whom may be reposing that lofty and generous spirit which may yet redeem the character they have lost.

While the French comedies are thus fitted to obtain universal admiration, none can see without the greatest pleasure the performances of that celebrated actress, who has so long been the ornament of the national theatre, and to whom the support of their comedy has been so long entrusted. During the greatest period of the revolution, Mademoiselle Mars has been the favourite and the delight of the people of Paris, and I do not know that any feeling among them is stronger or more national than the pride which they take in her incomparable acting; all the grace, and elegance, and genuine feeling which she so beautifully displays, they consider as belonging to her only because she is a French woman, and nothing would ever convince them that, had she been born in any other country, it would have been

possible that she should possess half the perfections which they now admire in her.

Mademoiselle Mars is probably as perfect an actress in comedy as any that ever appeared on any stage. She has united every advantage of countenance, and voice, and figure, which it is possible to conceive, and no one can ever have witnessed her incomparable acting, without feeling that the imagination can suggest nothing more completely lovely—more graceful or more natural and touching than her representation of character. Mademoiselle Mars has been most exquisitely beautiful, and though the period is past when that beauty had all the brilliancy and freshness of youth, time appears hardly to have dared to lay his chilling hand on that lovely countenance, and she still acts characters which require all the naïveté, and gaiety, and tenderness of youthful feeling, with every appearance of the spring of human life. It were impossible to describe the innumerable excellences which render her acting so perfectly enchanting;—the admirable manner in which the French comedies are performed is so particular to the stage of that country, that it would be quite fruitless to attempt to describe a style of acting unknown to the people of Britain, and of that style Mademoiselle Mars is the model. Every thing that can result from the truest elegance and gracefulness of manners—from the most genuine and lively *abandon* of feeling,—from the most winning sweetness of expression, and the greatest imaginable gaiety and benevolence, displayed in one of the most beau-

tiful women ever seen, and endowed with the most delightful and melodious voice, is united in Mademoiselle Mars; and all words were in vain, which would pretend to describe the bright and glittering vision which captivates the imagination. The only thing which can convey to an English reader the slightest notion of her enchanting acting, is the manner in which Miss O'Neil performs the scene in Juliet with the old nurse; because it is probably exactly the manner in which Mademoiselle Mars would perform that scene, but cannot afford any conception of her excellence in scenes of higher interest and greater feeling. Wherever Mademoiselle Mars has acted, in every part of France, the enthusiasm which she inspires, and the astonishing interest which they take in her acting, is such as could be felt only in France. We were fortunately in Lyons when she came there, on leaving Paris during the course of last summer, and during the few days we were there, nothing appeared to be thought of but the merits of this unrivalled actress. The interest which the recent visit of *Madame* had created was altogether lost in the delight which the performance of Mademoiselle Mars had occasioned: She was crowned publicly in the theatre with a garland of flowers, and a fete was celebrated in honour of her by the public bodies and authorities of the town.

The French comedies and comic acting are not less characteristic of the people than their tragedies. They are a gay and lively, but not a humane people. A Frenchman enters into amusements with

an eagerness and relish, of which, in this country, we have no conception; all his cares and sorrows are forgotten; all his serious occupations are postponed; all his unruly passions are calmed;—he thinks neither of his individual misfortunes, nor of his national degradation; neither of the friends whom he has lost in the war, nor of the foreign soldiers whom it has placed at his elbow; his whole soul is absorbed in the game, in the dance, or in the *spectacle*. But his object is not laughter, or passive enjoyment, or relaxation; it is the excitation of his spirits, the occupation, and interest, and agitation of his mind, the varied gratification of his senses, the exercise of his fancy, the display of his wit, and taste, and politeness.

The exhibitions at the theatres are accommodated to this taste. With the exception of some of Moliere's works, such as the Bourgeois Gentilhomme, and M. de Pourceaugnac, (which are seldom acted, at least at the Theatre Français), there are hardly any French comedies which are characterised by what we call humour, which have for their main object the representation of palpably ludicrous peculiarities of character and manner. You never hear, in a French theatre, the same loud incontrolable bursts of laughter, which are so often excited by representations of this kind in London. There are no such actors, at the principal theatres, as Mathews, or Liston, or Bannister, or Munden, or Emery, whose principal merit lies in mimicry and buffoonery. There are hardly any entertainments corresponding

in character to our farces; the after-pieces are short comedies, and characters in low life are introduced into them, not as objects of derision, but of interest and sympathy.

It seems not a little singular, that this taste in comedy should have survived all the disorders of the revolution, and remained unchanged amid the general diffusion of military habits and manners. This may be partly explained, by the circumstance, that the judges by whom theatrical exhibitions are mainly regulated, are stationary at Paris, while the men, whose actions have stamped the French character of the present day, have been dispersed over the world. But it must certainly be admitted, that the taste of the French has not undergone an alteration corresponding with that which is so obvious in their manners; and has not degenerated to the degree that might have been expected, from the diffusion of revolutionary ideas and licentious habits. The Theatre Français affords perhaps the best specimen that now remains of the style of conversation, and manners, and costume, of the old school of French politeness.

On the other hand, operas and genteel comedies, which are esteemed only by the higher ranks in England, are a favourite amusement of all ranks in France. The qualities which are most highly prized in the comedies, are, interest and variety of incident and situation, wit and liveliness of dialogue, and a certain elevation and elegance of character.

For the representation of pieces bearing this gene-

ral character, the French are certainly better fitted than any other people,—their native gaiety and sprightliness of disposition,—the polish which their manners so readily acquire,—their inexpressible confidence and self-conceit,—their love of shewing off, and attracting attention, give really a stage effect to many of their serious actions, and to almost all their trifling conversation and amusements. Hence, a stranger is particularly struck with the uniform excellence of the comic acting on the French stage; all the inferior parts are sustained with spirit and originality, and discriminating judgment; all the actors are at their ease, and a regular genteel comedy is as well acted throughout as a farce is on the London stage.

The greatest comic actor at the Theatre Français, is Fleury. He is an actor completely fitted for the French style of comedy. He gives you the idea of a perfect gentleman, with much wit and liveliness, and consummate confidence and self-possession; who delivers himself with inimitable archness and pleasantry, but without the least exaggeration or buffoonery; who has too high an opinion of himself and his powers, to descend to broad jokes or allusions belonging to the lower kinds of humour. Those who have an accurate recollection of the admirable acting of Irish Johnstone, in the characters of Major O'Flaherty, or Sir Lucius O'Trigger, will have a better conception than any description of ours can convey, of the style of acting in which Fleury so eminently excels.

It is remarked by Cibber, that a woman has hardly time to become a perfect actress, during the continuance of her personal attractions. If there ever was an exception to this remark, Mademoiselle Mars, whom we have already mentioned, is one. She was an admired actress, we were assured, before the revolution; yet she has still, at least on the stage, a light elegant figure, and a countenance of youthful animation and beauty; while long experience has given that polish and perfection to her acting, which can be derived from no other source. It is impossible to conceive any thing more perfect as a specimen of art, or a more beautiful, as an imitation of nature, than her representation of the kind of heroine most commonly to be found in a French comedy; lively and playful, yet elegant and graceful; entering with ardour into amusements, yet capable of deep feeling and serious reflection: fond of admiration and flattery, yet innocent and modest; full of petty artifice and coquetry, yet natural and unaffected in affairs of importance; capricious and giddy in appearance, but warm-hearted and affectionate in reality. It is a character to which there is a kind of approximation among many French women, and if it were as well supported by them in real life, as by her on the stage, it would be difficult even for French vanity to describe the fascination of their manner, in terms of admiration which would not command general assent. There is much variety, it must be added, in her powers. On one occasion, we saw her act Henriette in Les Femmes Savante of Mo-

liere, and Catau in La Partie de Chasse de Henri IV. and it was difficult to say whether most to admire the wit and elegance, and polite raillery of the woman of fashion, or the innocent gaiety and interesting naïveté of the simple peasant girl.

There is no actress at present on the English stage of equal eminence in a similar line of parts. Mrs Jordan may have equalled her in gaiety, and probably excelled her in humorous expression; but we suspect she must always have been deficient in elegance and refinement. The actress, who, we think, comes nearest to her in genteel comedy, is Mrs Henry Siddons, in her beautiful representation of such parts as Beatrice, or Viola; but she has not the same appearance of natural light-hearted buoyancy, and playfulness of disposition. You see occasional transient indications of a serious thoughtful turn of mind, which assumes gaiety and cheerfulness, rather than passes naturally into it; which you admire, because it places the actress in a more amiable light, but which takes off from the fidelity and perfection of her art.

Corresponding to the Opera House in London, there are three Theatres in Paris; the Odeon, the Opera Comique, and the Academie de Musique. At the first of these there is an immense company of musicians, of all kinds; and Italian Operas are admirably performed. It is the handsomest, and perhaps the most genteelly attended of any of the Parisian theatres. The music here, as well as the

musicians, are all Italian; and there could certainly be no comparison between it and the French, which is generally feeble and insipid in pathetic expression, and extravagant and bombastic in all attempts at grandeur. The first singer at the Odeon was Madame Fessi, who has since been in London; but Madame Morelli, with a voice somewhat inferior in power, appeared to us a more elegant actress. The performance of Girard on the flute was wonderful, and met with extravagant applause, but it was somewhat too laboured and artificial for our untutored ears.

The Opera Comique is confined almost exclusively to the sort of entertainment which the name expresses: the scenes are generally laid in the country, and the characters introduced, are of the lower orders: the pieces commonly represented, belong to the same class, therefore, as the English operas, Love in a Village, Rosina, &c. but the dialogue is in general more animated, less vulgar in the lower parts, and less sentimental in the higher. The number of performers at this theatre, is not very great; but there are some good singers and dancers, and the acting is almost uniformly excellent. Indeed, the French character is peculiarly well fitted for assuming the gay and lively tone that pervades their *opera buffa*, which may be characterised as amusing and interesting in general, rather than comic; as full of spirit and vivacity, rather than of humour. Occasionally, however, characters and incidents of true humour are introduced; but these are in general

considered as belonging to a lower species of amusement; and are to be found in higher perfection, we believe, in some of the inferior theatres, particularly the Theatre des Varietés.

The acting at the Opera Comique appeared to us deserving of the same encomiums with the comic acting at the Theatre Français: every part is well supported, not with the elegance that characterises the lesser theatre, but with perfect adaption to the situations of the characters. A Mademoiselle Regnaud, of this theatre, acts with admirable liveliness and spirit. Her quarrel and reconciliation with her lover, in "Le Nouveau Seigneur du Village," appeared to us a chef d'œuvre of the light and pleasing style of acting, which suits the character of the French comic opera.

The Academie de Musique, (which is celebrated for dancers, not for musicians), is on a very different plan from the opera in London. The performers being in part supported by government, the prices of admission are made very low; and the company, particularly in the parterre, or pit, is therefore of a much lower class than in London, though perfect decorum is, as usual, uniformly observed. The performances at this theatre are, we think, decidedly superior to those in the London opera. This superiority consists partly in the preeminent merits of the first-rate dancers; but chiefly in the uniform excellence of the vast numbers of inferior performers, the beauty of the scenery, and the complete knowledge of stage effect, which is

displayed in all the arrangements of the representations.

We believe there are not at present on the London stage any dancers of equal merit with Madame Gardel, or Mademoiselle Bigottini. The former of these is said to be 45 years of age, and has long been reckoned the best figuranté on this stage. Her face is not handsome, but her figure is admirably formed for the display of her art, of which she is probably the most perfect mistress to be found in Europe. The latter, an Italian by birth, is much younger, and if she does not yet quite equal her rival in artificial accomplishments, she at least attracts more admirers by her youth and beauty, by the exquisite symmetry of her form, and the natural grace and elegance of her movements. The one of these is certainly the first dancer, and the other is perhaps the most beautiful woman in Paris.

But the same unfortunate peculiarity of taste which we formerly noticed in the painting and in the gardening of the French, extends to their opera dancing; indeed it may be said to be the worst feature of their general taste. They are too fond of the exhibition of art, and too regardless of the object to which art should be made subservient. Dancing should never be considered as a mere display of agility and muscular power. It is then degraded to a level with Harlequin's tricks, wrestling, tumbling, or such other branches of the fine arts. The main object of the art unquestionably is, to display in full perfection the beauty and grace of the human form

and movements. In so far as perfect command of the limbs is necessary, or may be made subservient to this object, it cannot be too much esteemed; but when you pass this limit, it not only ceases to be pleasing, but often becomes positively offensive. Many of the *pirouettes*, and other difficult movements, which are introduced into the *pas seuls*, *pas de deux*, &c. in which the great dancers display their whole powers, however wonderful as specimens of art, are certainly any thing but elegant or graceful. The applause in the French opera seemed to us to be in direct proportion to the difficulty, and to bear no relation whatever to the beauty, of the performances. A Frenchman regards, with perfect indifference, dances, which, to a stranger at least, appear performed with inimitable grace, because they are only common dances, admirably well executed; but when one of the male performers, after spinning about for a long time, with wonderful velocity, arrests himself suddenly, and stands immoveable on one foot; or when one of the females wheels round on the toes of one foot, holding her other limb nearly in a horizontal position—he breaks out into extravagant exclamations of astonishment and delight: "Quel plomb! Ah diable! Sacre Dieu!" &c.

But although the principal dances at the Opera, and those on which the French chiefly pride themselves, are much injured, in point of beauty, by this artificial taste, the execution of the less laboured parts of these dances, and of nearly the whole of their common national dances, is quite free from

this defect, and is, we should conceive, the most beautiful exhibition of the kind that is any where to be seen. It is only in a city where amusements of all kinds are sought for, not merely by way of relaxation, but as matters of serious interest and national concern, and where dancing, in particular, is an object of universal and passionate admiration, that such numbers of first-rate dancers can be found, as perform constantly at the Academie de Musique. The whole strength of the company there, which often appeared on the stage at the time we speak of, was certainly not less than 150; and there were hardly any of these whose performance was not highly pleasing, and did not present the appearance of animation and interest in the parts assigned them.

Many of the serious operas performed here are exceedingly beautiful; they are got up, not perhaps at more expence, nor with more magnificence than the spectacles in London, but certainly with more taste and knowledge of stage effect. The scenery is beautifully painted, and is disposed upon the stage with more variety, and in such a manner as to form a more complete illusion, than on any other stage we have seen. The music and singing are certainly inferior to what is heard at the Odeon, but the acting, where it is not injured by the effect of the recitative, is very generally excellent; and the number and variety of dances introduced, afford opportunities of displaying all the attractions of this theatre.

The pantomimes are uniformly executed with

inimitable grace and effect. We were particularly pleased with that called L'Enfant Prodigue, in which the power and graces of Mademoiselle Bigottini are displayed to all possible advantage. One of the most splendid of the serious operas, is that entitled Le Corasmera de Cairo, the scenery of which was painted in Egypt, by one of the artists who accompanied Napoleon thither, and is beyond comparison the most highly finished, and beautiful, that we have ever seen, and gives an idea of the aspect of that country, which no other work of art could convey. Another opera, which attracted our attention, was called " Ossian, ou les Bardes." One of the scenes, representing the heroes and heroines of departed times seated on the clouds, displayed a degree of magnificence worthy of its subject, the dream of Ossian. Some of the Highland scenery in this opera was really like nature; and the dresses, particularly the cambric and vandyked kilts, bore some distant analogy to the real costume of the Highlanders; and although we could not gratify the Parisians who sat by us, by admiring the resemblance of the female figures, who skipped about the stage with single muslin petticoats, and pink and white kid slippers, to the " Montagnardes Ecossaises *c'est a dire demi-* " *sauvages*," whom they were intended to represent, we at least flattered their vanity, by expressing our very sincere wish that the latter had resembled the former.

But the most beautiful of all the exhibitions at the Academie de Musique, are the ballets which repre-

sent *pastoral scenes* and *rural fetes*, such as Colinette a la Cour, L'Epreuve Villageoise, &c. It is singular, that in a city, the inhabitants of which have so entire a contempt for rural enjoyments, pieces of this kind should form so favourite a theatrical entertainment; but it must be confessed, that such scenes as form the subject of these ballets, occur but seldom in the course of a country life, and never in the degree of perfection in which they are represented in Paris. The union of rustic simplicity and innocence, with the polish and refinement which are acquired by intercourse with the world, may be conceived by the help of these exhibitions, but can hardly be witnessed in real life. The illusion, however, when such scenes are exhibited, is exceedingly pleasing; and nowhere certainly is this illusion so perfect, as in the Academie de Musique, where the charming scenery, the enlivening music, the number and variety of characters, which are supported with life and spirit, the beauty of the female performers, and the graceful movements, and lively, animated air of all;—if they do not recal to the spectator any thing which he has really witnessed, seem to transport him into the more delightful regions in which his fancy has occasionally wandered, and to realize for a moment to him, those fairy scenes, to which his youthful imagination had been familiarized, by the beautiful fictions of poetry or romance.

The Parisian theatres are at all times sources of much amusement and delight; but at the time we

speak of, they were doubly interesting, as affording opportunities of seeing the most distinguished characters of this eventful age; and as furnishing occasional strong indications of the state of popular feeling in France. The interest of occurrences of this last kind is now gone by, and it is almost unnecessary for us to bear testimony to the strong party that uniformly manifested itself when any sentiment was uttered, expressive of a wish for war, of admiration of martial achievements, and of indignation at foreign influence, or domestic perfidy, (under which head, the conduct of Talleyrand and of Marmont was included;) and more especially, when the success and glory, and *eternal, immutable, untarnished* honour of France were the theme of declamation. The applause at passages of this last description seemed sometimes ludicrous enough when the theatres were guarded by Russian grenadiers, and nearly half filled with allied officers, loaded with honours which had been won in combating the French armies.

The majority of the audience, however, appeared always delighted at the change of government, and in the opera in particular, the first time that the King appeared, the expression of loyalty was long, reiterated and enthusiastic, far beyond our most sanguine anticipations. It would have been absurd to judge of the real feelings of the majority of the Parisians, still more of the nation at large, from this scene; and it was certainly not to be wished, that a blind and devoted loyalty to one sovereign should take the place of infatuated attachment to another;

yet it was impossible not to sympathize with the joy of people who had been agitated, during the best part of their lives, by political convulsions, or oppressed by military tyranny, but who fancied themselves at length relieved from both, and who connected the hope of spending the remainder of their days in tranquillity and peace, with the recollections of the happiness and prosperity of their country, which they had received from their fathers, under the long line of its ancient kings. It was impossible to hear the national air of "Vive Henri Quatre," and the enthusiastic acclamations which accompanied it, without entering for the moment into the feeling of unhesitating attachment and unqualified loyalty, which has so long prevailed in most countries of the world, but which the citizens of a free country should indulge only when it has been deserved by long experience and tried virtue.

It was with different, but not less interesting feelings, that we listened to the same tune from the splendid bands of the Russian and Prussian guards, as they passed along the Boulevards, on their return to their own countries. It was a grand and moving spectacle of political virtue, to see the armies which had been arrayed against France, striving to do honour to the government which she had assumed:—instead of breathing curses, or committing outrages on the great and guilty city, which had provoked all their vengeance; to see them march out of the gates of Paris, with the regularity of the strictest military discipline, to the sound of the

grand national air, which spoke " peace to her " walls, and prosperity to her palaces,"—bearing, as it were, a blessing on the capital which they had conquered and forgiven: It was a scene that left an impression on the mind worthy of the troops who had bravely and successfully opposed the domineering power of France,—who had struggled with it when it was strongest, and ruled it when it was wildest; but who spared it when it was fallen,—who forgot their wrongs when it was in their power to revenge them,—who cast the laurels from their brows, as they passed before the rightful monarch of France, and honoured him as the representative of a great and gallant people, long abased by ambition, and beguiled by tyranny; but now acknowledging their errors, and professing moderation and repentance.

CHAPTER VIII.

PARIS—THE FRENCH ARMY AND IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT.

It is certainly a mistake to suppose, that the military power of France was first created by Napoleon, or that military habits were actually forced on the people, with the view of aiding his ambitious projects. The French have a restless, aspiring, enterprising spirit, not accompanied, as in England, by a feeling of individual importance, and a desire of individual independence, but modified by habits of submission to arbitrary power, and fitted, by the influence of despotic government, for the subordination of military discipline. Add to this, the encouragement which was held out by the rapid promotion of soldiers during the wars of the revolution, when the high-

est military offices were not only open to the attainment, but were generally appropriated to the claims of men who rose from the ranks; and the general dissemination, at that period, of unbounded desire for violence and rapine: And it will probably be allowed, that the spirit of the French nation, at the time when he came to the head of it, was truly and almost exclusively military. He was himself a great soldier; he rose to the supreme government of a great military people, and he availed himself of their habits and principles to gratify his ambition, and extend his fame; but he ought not to be charged with having created the spirit, which in fact created him; a spirit so powerful, and so extensively diffused, that in comparison of it, even his efforts might be said to be "dashing with his oar to hasten "the cataract;" to be—"waving with his fan to give "speed to the wind." The favourite saying of Napoleon, "Every Frenchman is a soldier, and as such, "at the disposal of the Emperor," expresses a principle which was not merely enforced by arbitrary power, but engrafted in the character and habits of the French people.

The French are certainly admirably fitted for becoming soldiers: they have a restless activity, which surmounts difficulties, a buoyancy and elasticity of disposition, which rises superior to hardships, and calamities, and privations, not with patient fortitude, but with ease and cheerfulness. A Frenchman does not regard war, merely as the serious struggle in which his patriotism and valour are to

be tried; he loves it for its own sake, for the interest and agitation it gives to his mind; it is his "game,—his gain,—his glory,—his delight." Other nations of Europe have become military, in consequence of threats or injuries, of the dread of hostile invasion, of the presence of foreign armies, or the galling influence of foreign power; but if the origin of the French military spirit may be traced to similar sources, it must at least be allowed, that the effect has been out of all proportion to the cause.

It is probable, however, that the effervescence of military ideas and feelings, which arose out of the revolution, would have gradually subsided, had it not been for the fostering influence of the imperial government. The turbulent and irregular energies of a great people let loose from former bonds, received a fixed direction, and were devoted to views of military ascendancy and national aggrandizement under Napoleon. The continued gratification of the French vanity, by the fame of victories and the conquest of nations, completed the effect on the manners and habits of the people, which the events of the revolution had begun. Napoleon well knew, that in flattering this ruling propensity, he took the whole French nation on their weak side, and he had some reason for saying, that their thirst for martial glory and political influence ought to be a sufficient apology to them for all the wars into which he plunged them.

It is impossible to spend even a few days in France without seeing strong indications of the prevailing

love of military occupations, and admiration of military merit. The common peasants in the fields shew, by their conversation, that they are both deeply interested in the glory of the French arms, and competent to discuss the manners in which they are conducted. In the parts of the country which had been the seat of war, we found them always able to give a good general description of the military events that had taken place; and when due allowance was made for their invariable exaggeration of the number of the allied troops, and concealment of that of the French, these accounts, as far as we could judge by comparing them with the official details, and with the information of officers who had borne a part in the campaign, were tolerably correct. The fluency with which they talked of military operations, of occupying positions, cutting off retreats, defiling over bridges, debouching from woods, advancing and retreating, marching and bivouacking, shewed the habitual current of their thoughts; and they were always more willing to enter on the details of such operations, than to enumerate their own losses, or dwell on their individual sufferings.

A similar eagerness to enter into conversation on military subjects, was observable in almost all Frenchmen of the lower orders, with whom we had any dealings. Our landlord at Paris, a quiet sickly man, who had no connection with the army, and who had little to say for himself on most subjects, displayed a marvellous fluency on military tactics; and seemed to think that no time was lost which was employ-

ed in lecturing to us on the glory and honour of the French army, and impressing on our minds its superiority to the allies.

Indeed, the whole French nation certainly take a pride in the deeds of their brethren in arms, which absorbs almost all other feelings; and which is the more singular, as it does not appear to us to be connected with strong or general affection or gratitude for any particular individual. It was not the fame of any one general, but the general honour of the French arms, about which they seemed anxious. We never met with a Frenchman, of any rank, or of any political persuasion, who considered the French army as fairly overcome in the campaign of 1814; and the shifts and contrivances by which they explained all the events of the campaign, without having recourse to that supposition, were wonderfully ingenious. The best informed Frenchmen whom we met in Paris, even those who did not join in the popular cry of treason and corruption against Marmont, regarded the terms granted by Alexander to their city, as a measure of policy rather than of magnanimity. They uniformly maintained, that the possession of the heights of Belleville and Montmartre did not secure the command of Paris; that if Marmont had chosen, he might have defended the town after he had lost these positions; and that, if the Russians had attempted to take the town by force, they might have succeeded, but would have lost half their army. Indeed, so confidently were these propositions maintained by all the best inform-

ed Frenchmen, civil or military, royalist or imperialist, whom we met, that we were at a loss whether to give credit to the statement uniformly given us by the allied officers, that the town was completely commanded by those heights, and might have been burnt and destroyed, without farther risk on the part of the assailants, after they were occupied. The English officers, with whom we had an opportunity of conversing on this subject, seemed divided in opinion regarding it; and we should have hesitated to which party to yield our belief, had not the conduct of Napoleon and his officers, in the campaign of the present year, the extraordinary precautions which they took to prevent access to the positions in question, by laying the adjacent country under water, and fortifying the heights themselves, clearly shewn the importance, in a military point of view, which is really attached to them.

The credulity of the French, in matters connected with the operations of their armies, often astonished us. It appeared to arise, partly from the scarcity of information in the country; from their having no means of confirming, correcting, or disproving the exaggerated and garbled statements which were laid before them; and partly from their national vanity, which disposed them to yield a very easy assent to every thing that exalted their national character. In no other country, we should conceive, would such extravagant and manifestly exaggerated statements be swallowed, as the French soldiers are continually in the habit of dispersing among their countrymen.

From the style of the conversation which we were accustomed to hear at *caffés* and *tables d'hôte*, we should conceive, that the French bulletins, which appeared to us such models of gasconade, were admirably well fitted, not merely to please the taste, but even to regulate the belief, or at least the professions of belief, of the majority of French politicians, with regard to the events they commemorate.

The general interest of a nation in the deeds and honours of its army, is the best possible security for its general conduct; and it must be admitted, that in those qualities which are chiefly valued by the French nation, the French army was never surpassed; while it is equally obvious, that both the army and the people have at present little regard for some of the finest virtues which can adorn the character of a soldier.

The grand characteristic of the French army, on which both the soldiers and the people pride themselves, is what was long ago ably pointed out by the author of " Caractere des Armeés Europiennes " Actuelles"—the individual intelligence and activity of the soldiers. They were taken at that early age, when the influence of previous habit is small, and when the character is easily moulded into any form that is wished; they have been accustomed to pride themselves on no qualities, but those which are serviceable against their enemies, and they have had before them the most animating prospect of rewards and promotion, if their conduct was distinguished.

Under these circumstances, the native vigour, and activity, and acuteness of their minds, took the very direction which was likely, not merely to make them good soldiers, but to fit them for becoming great officers; and this ultimate destination of his experience, and ability, and valour, has a very manifest effect on the mind of the French soldier. We hardly ever spoke to one of them, of any rank, about any of the battles in which he had been engaged, without observing, that he had in his head a general plan of the action, which he always delivered to us with perfect fluency, in the technical language of war, and with quite as much exaggeration as was necessary for his purpose. What he wanted in correct information, he would assuredly make up with lies, but he would seldom fail to give a general consistent idea of the affair: and it was obvious, that the manœuvres of the armies, and the conduct of the generals, on both sides, had occupied as much of his consideration, and reflection, as his own individual dangers and adventures.

When we afterwards entered into conversation with some English private soldiers, at Brussels and Antwerp, concerning the actions they had seen, we perceived a very marked difference. They were very ready to enter into details concerning all that they had themselves witnessed, and very anxious to be perfectly correct in their statements; but they did not appear ever to have troubled their heads about the general plan of the actions. They had abundance of technical phrases concerning their own de-

partments of the service; but very few words relative to the manœuvring of large bodies of men. Their rule seemed to be, to do their own duty, and let their officers do theirs; the principle of the division of labour seemed to prevail in military, as well as in civil affairs, much more extensively in England than in France.

The soldiers of the French imperial guard, in particular, are remarkably intelligent, and in general very communicative. We entered into conversation with some of these men at La Fere, and from one of them, who had been in the great battle at Laon, we had fully as distinct an account of that action as we were able to collect, the next day, from several officers who accompanied us from St Quentin to Cambray, and who had likewise been engaged in it. When we asked him the numbers of the two armies on that day, he replied without the least hesitation, that the allied army was 100,000 and the French 30,000.—Another of these men had been at Salamanca, and after we had granted his fundamental assumption, that the English army there was 120,000 strong, and the French 40,000, he proceeded to give us a very good account of the battle.

These men, as well as almost all the French officers and soldiers with whom we had opportunities at different times of conversing, gave their opinions of the allied armies without any reserve, and with considerable discrimination. Of the Russians and Prussians they said, "Il savent bien faire la guerre;

"ils sont bons soldats;" but of the common soldiers of these services in particular, they said, "Ils "sont tres forts, et durs comme l'ame du diable— "mais ils sont des veritables betes; ils n'ont point "d'intelligence. La puissance de l'armée Fran-"çaise," they added, with an air of true French gasconade, "est dans l'intelligence des soldats."— Of the Austrians, they said, "Ils brillent dans leur "cavalerie, mais pour leur infanterie, elle ne vaut "rien."

From these soldiers we could extract no more particular character of the English troops, than "Ils se battent bien." But it is doing no more than justice to the French officers, even such as were decidedly imperialist, who conversed with us at Paris, and in different parts of the country, to acknowledge that they uniformly spoke in the highest terms of the conduct of the English troops. The expression which they very commonly used, in speaking of the manner in which the English carried on the war in Spain, and in France, was, "loyauté." "Les Russes, et les Prussiens," they said, "sont grands et beaux hommes, mais ils n'ont "pas le cœur ou la loyauté des Anglais. Les Anglais "sont la nation, du monde qui font la guerre avec la "plus de loyauté," &c. This referred partly to their valour in the field, and partly to their humane treatment of prisoners and wounded; and partly also to their honourable conduct in France, where they preserved the strictest discipline, and paid for every thing they took. Of the behaviour of the English army

in France, they always spoke as excellent :—" digne " de leur civilization."

A French officer who introduced himself to us one night in a box at the opera, expressing his high respect for the English, against whom, he said, he had the honour to fight for six years in Spain, described the steadiness and determination of the English infantry in attacking the heights, on which the French army was posted at Salamanca, in terms of enthusiastic admiration. Another, who had been in the battle of Thoulouse, extolled the conduct of the Highland regiments in words highly expressive of

" The stern joy which warriors feel,
" In foemen worthy of their steel."

" Il y a quelques regimens des Ecossais sans culottes," said he, " dans l'armeé de Wellington, qui se battent joliment." He then described the conduct of one regiment in particular, (probably the 42d or 79th), who attacked a redoubt defended with cannon, and marched up to it in perfect order, never taking the muskets from their shoulders, till they were on the parapet : " Si tranquillement,—sacre Dieu ! c'etoit " superbe."

Of the military talents of the Duke of Wellington they spoke also with much respect, though generally with strong indications of jealousy. They were often very ingenious in deriving means of explaining his victories, without compromising, as they

called it, the honour of the French arms. At Salamanca, they said, that in consequence of the wounds of Marmont and other generals, their army was two hours without a commander. At Vittoria again, it was commanded by Jourdan, and any body could beat Jourdan. At Talavera, he committed "les "plus grandes sottises du monde; il a fait une "contre-marche digne d'un bete." Some of the Duke of Wellington's victories over Soult they stoutly denied, and others they ascribed to great superiority of numbers, and to the large drafts of Soult's best troops for the purpose of forming skeleton battalions *to receive the conscripts of* 1813.

The French pride themselves greatly on the *honour* of their soldiers, and in this quality they uniformly maintain that they are unrivalled, at least on the continent of Europe. To this it is easy to reply, that according to the common notions of honour, it has been violated more frequently and more completely by the French army than by any other. But this is in fact eluding the observation rather than refuting it. The truth appears to be, that the French *soldiers* have a stronger sense of honour than those of almost any other service; but that the *officers*, having risen from the ranks, have brought with them to the most exalted stations, no more refined or liberal sentiments than those by which the private soldiers very frequently are actuated; and have on the contrary acquired habits of duplicity and intrigue, from which their brethren in inferior situations are exempt.

When we say of the French soldiers, that they have a strong sense of honour, we mean merely to express, that they will encounter dangers, and hardships, and privations, and calamities of every kind, with wonderful fortitude, and even cheerfulness, from no other motive than an *esprit du corps*—a regard for the character of the French arms. Without provocation from their enemies, without the prospect of victory, without the hope of plunder, without the conviction of the interest of their country in their deeds, without even the consolation of expecting care or attention in case of wounds or sickness, they will not hesitate to lavish their blood and sacrifice their lives for the glory of France. Other troops go through similar scenes of suffering and danger with equal fortitude, when under the influence of strong passions, when fired by revenge, or animated by the hope of plunder, or cheered by the acclamations of victory; but with the single exception of the British army, we doubt whether there are any to whom the mere spirit of military honour is of itself so strong a stimulus.

We have already noticed the state of the French sick and wounded, left in the hospitals at Wilna during the retreat from Russia; a state so deplorable, as to have excited the strongest commiseration among their most indignant enemies. This, however, was but a single instance of the system almost uniformly acted on, we have understood, by the French medical staff in Russia, Germany, and Spain, of deserting their hospitals on the approach of the enemy, so as

to leave to him, if he did not chuse to see the whole of the patients perish before his eyes, the burden of maintaining them. The miseries which this system must have occasioned, in the campaign of 1813 in particular, require no illustration.

Another regulation of the French army, during the campaign of that year, will shew the utter carelessness of its leaders, in regard to the happiness of the soldiers. When the men, who were incapacitated for service, by wounds or disease, were sent back to France, they were directed, in the first instance, to Mentz, where their uniforms, and any money they might have about them, were regularly taken from them, and given to the young conscripts who were passing through to join the armies; they were then dressed in miserable old rags, which were collected in the adjacent provinces by Jews employed for that purpose, and in this state they were sent to *beg* their way to their homes. Such, as we were assured by some of our countrymen, who saw many of these men passing through Verdun, was the reward of thousands of the "*grande nation*," who had lost their limbs or their health in vainly endeavouring to maintain the glory and influence of their country in foreign states. In the campaign of 1814, which was carried on during the continuance of a frost of almost unprecedented intensity, and in so rapid and variable a manner, and with so large bodies of troops, as to prevent the establishment of regular hospitals, or of any thing like a regular Commissariat, the French troops, particularly the young

conscripts and national guards, suffered dreadfully; and numbers of them who escaped the swords of their enemies, perished miserably, or were disabled for life, in consequence of hardships, and fatigues, and privations.

All these examples were known to the French soldiers—they took place daily before their eyes, and, in the last instance, the allies took pains to let them know, that the only obstacle to honourable peace, was the obstinacy of their commander: yet their ardour continued unabated; the young soldiers displayed a degree of valour in every action of both campaigns, which drew forth the warm applause even of their enemies; and it is not to be doubted, that the troops whom Napoleon collected at Fontainbleau, at the end of the campaign in France, were enthusiastically bent on carrying into effect, the frantic resolution of attacking Paris, then occupied by a triple force of the allies, from which his officers, with difficulty dissuaded him.

In like manner, there is probably no general but Napoleon, who would not have attempted to terminate the miseries of the army during the retreat from Moscow, by entering into negotiation with the Russians; nor is there any army but the French which would have tamely consented to be entirely sacrificed to the obstinacy of an individual. But to have concluded a convention with the Russians would have been *compromising the honour of the French arms*; and this little form of words seemed to strike more terror to the heart of the French soldiers, than

either the swords of the Russians, or the dreary wastes and wintry storms of Russia, which might have been apostrophised in the words of the poet,

> " Alas! even your unhallowed breath
> May spare the victim fallen low,
> But man will ask no truce to death,
> No bounds to human woe."

" He saw, without emotion, (says Labaume), the " miserable remains of an army, lately so powerful, " defile before him ; yet his presence never excited a " murmur; on the contrary, it animated even the most " timid, who were always tranquil when in presence " of the emperor." At the present moment, from all the accounts that we have received, as well as from our own observations of those French soldiers whom we have ourselves seen, after their return from Moscow, the sentiments of the survivors of that expedition, with regard to Napoleon, remained unchanged; and no person who has read any of the narratives of the campaign, can ascribe their constancy to any other cause, than that feeling of attachment to the glory of their country, to which the French, however improperly, give the name of military honour.

If the character of the French soldiers is deserving of high admiration for their constancy and courage, it must be observed, on the other hand, that there is a mixture of *selfishness* in it, an utter disregard of the feelings, and indifference as to the sufferings, not merely of their enemies, or of the inhabitants of the countries which they traverse, but even of their best

friends and companions, which forbids us to go farther in their praise. It is as unnecessary, as it would be painful, to enter on an enumeration of the instances of wanton cruelty, violence, and rapacity, which have sullied the fame of their most brilliant deeds in arms. It will be long before the French name will recover the disgrace which the remembrance of such scenes as Moscow, or Saragossa, or Tarragona, has attached to it, in every country of Europe; and it is impossible to have a more convincing proof of the tyrannical and oppressive conduct of the French armies in foreign states, than the universal enthusiasm with which Europe has risen against them, the indignant and determined spirit, with which all ranks of every country have united to rid themselves of an oppression, not less galling to their individual feelings, than degrading to their national character. But it is particularly worthy of remark, that the latest and most authentic writers in France itself, who have given any account of the French armies, have noticed selfishness, and disregard of the feelings of their own comrades, as well as of all other persons, as one of the most prominent features of their character. We need only refer to Labaume's book on the expedition to Russia, to Miot's work on the Egyptian campaigns, or to Rocca's history of the war in Spain, for ample proofs of the correctness of this observation. Other soldiers become more and more attached to each other, as they have encountered more perils together; but the French seem to learn nothing more constantly, or more certainly, in the course of their service, than the importance of a man

to himself. Whether this peculiarity is to be ascribed chiefly to their national character, or to the nature of the services in which they have been engaged, it is not very easy to decide.

The dishonourable conduct of the French officers, particularly of the superior officers, in the present year, is much more easily explained than excused. They had risen from the ranks—they had been engaged all their lives in active and iniquitous services—they had been accustomed to look to success, as the best criterion of merit, and to regard attachment to their leaders and their colours, as the only duties of soldiers;—they had never thought seriously on morality or religion—they had been applauded by their countrymen and fellow soldiers, for actions in direct violation of both—and they had been taught to consider that applause as their highest honour, and legitimate reward. Under these circumstances, it is easy to see, that they could have little information with regard to the true interests of France, and that they would regard the most sacred engagements as binding only in so far as general opinion would reprobate the violation of them; and when a strong party shewed itself, in the nation as well as the army, ready to support them, and to extol their conduct in rising against the government, that their oaths would have no influence to restrain them. It is to be considered, likewise, that a large proportion of the officers had been originally republicans. They had been engaged in long and active military service, and been elated with military glory; in the multi-

plicity of their duties, and the intoxication of their success as soldiers, they had ceased to be citizens; but during the repose which succeeded the establishment of the Bourbons, when they again found themselves in the midst of their countrymen, their original political feelings and prejudices returned, embittered and exasperated by the influence of their military habits, and the remembrance of their military disgraces. We have ourselves conversed with several officers, who were strongly attached to Napoleon, but whose political views were decidedly republican; and have heard it stated, that the officers of artillery and engineers are supposed to be particularly democratic in their principles.

It is much easier to account for the conduct of the French army since the dethronement of Napoleon, than to point out any means by which that conduct could have been altered. It was stated to us at Paris, that the number of military officers at that time to be provided for by government, was upwards of 60,000. These would certainly comprise a very large proportion of the talents and enterprise of the French nation. The number of them that can have been sincerely devoted to the Bourbons, or that can have been otherwise disposed of since that time, cannot be great; nor do we see by what means it will be possible to reconcile the majority of this very important class of men, to a government which has twice owed its elevation to the discomfiture and humiliation of the French arms.

It may be easily conceived, that in an army, the

officers of which have, for the most part, risen from the ranks, the principles of strict military subordination cannot be enforced with the same punctilious rigour as in services where a marked distinction is constantly kept up between officers and soldiers. There is a more gradual transition from the highest to the lowest situations of the French army—a more complete amalgamation of the whole mass, than is consistent with the views of other governments in the maintenance of their standing armies.

It is true, that a change has taken place in the composition of the French army, in this respect, under the imperial government. A number of military schools were established and encouraged in different parts of the country, and a great number of young men were sent to these by their parents, under the understanding, that after being educated in them, they should become officers at once, without passing through the inferior steps, to which they would otherwise have been devoted by the conscription. A great number of officers, therefore, have of late years been appointed from these schools to the army, who have never served in the ranks; but the manners and habits which they acquire at the schools are, we should conceive, very little superior to what they might have learnt from the private soldiers, who would otherwise have been their associates. A comparison of the appearance and manner of the pupils of the Ecole Militaire, with those of the young men at the English military colleges, would shew, as strongly as any other parallel that could be drawn,

the difference in respectability and gentlemanlike feeling between the English and French officers.

There is so little of uniformity in dress, of regard to external appearance, or of shew of subordination, and inferiority to their officers, in the French soldiers, that a stranger would be apt to consider them as deficient in discipline. The fact is, that they know perfectly, from being continually engaged in active service, what are the essentials of military discipline, and that they are quite careless of all superfluous forms. Whatever regulations are necessary, in any particular circumstances, are strictly enforced; and the men submit to them, not from any principle of slavish subjection to their officers, but rather from deference to their superior intelligence and information, and from a regard to the good of the service.

The French army may, in fact, be said to have little of the feelings which are truly military. The officers have not the strong feeling of humanity, and the high and just sense of honour, not merely as members of the army, but as individuals; the soldiers have not the habit of implicit obedience and attachment to their own peculiar duties; and the whole have not the lively sense of responsibility to their country, and dependence on their sovereign, which are probably essential to the existence of an army which shall not be dangerous, even to the state that maintains it. The French army submitted implicitly to Napoleon, because he was their general; but we should doubt if they ever considered them-

selves, under his dominion, as the servants of France. They appear, at present, at least, to think themselves an independent body, who have a right to act according to their own judgment, and are accountable to nobody for their actions: In this idea of their own importance they were, of course, encouraged by Napoleon, who, on his return from Elba, spoke of the injuries done by the Bourbons to the *army and people*, and assigned the former the most honourable place in his Champ de Mai; and it will appear by no means surprising, that they should have acquired these sentiments, when we consider the importance which has been attached to their exploits by their countrymen, the encouragement to which they have been accustomed, the preference to all other classes of men which was shewn them by the late government, and the nature of the services in which they have been engaged, and for which they have been rewarded; circumstances fitted to assimilate them, in reality as well as appearance, rather to an immense band of freebooters, having no principle but union among themselves, and submission to their chiefs, than to an established and responsible standing army.

This observation applies to the feelings and principles of the soldiers taken as a body, not to their individual habits: for, excepting in the case of the detachment of the imperial guard, quartered at Fontainbleau, we never understood that the French soldiers, in time of peace, at least among their own countrymen, were accused of outrage or rapine.

There is considerable variety in the personal appearance of the French soldiers. The infantry are generally little men, much inferior to the Russians and Prussians in size and weight; but as they are almost all young, they appear equally well fitted for bearing fatigues, and they have an activity in their gait and demeanour, which accords well with their general character. In travelling through the country, we could almost always tell a French soldier from one of the allies at a distance, by the spring of his step. They have another excellent quality, that of being easily fed. Nothing appeared to excite more astonishment or indignation in France, than the quantity of food consumed by the allied troops. We found at Paris, that the Russian convalescents, occupying the hospitals which had formerly been appropriated to French troops, actually eat three times the rations which the French had been allowed. Frenchmen of the middling and higher ranks appear to have generally very keen appetites, and often surprise Englishmen by the magnitude and variety of their meals; but the peasantry and lower orders are accustomed to much poorer fare than the corresponding classes, at least in the southern part of our island, and the ordinary diet of the French soldiers is inferior to that of the English. In garrison, they are never allowed animal food, at least when in their own country, and the better living to which they are accustomed in foreign countries, and on active service, is a stronger recommendation of war

to these volatile and unreflecting spirits, than it might at first be thought.

The French cavalry are almost universally fine men, much superior to the infantry in appearance. The horses of the *chasseurs à cheval*, and hussars, are small, but active and hardy; and even those of the cuirassiers have not the weight of the English heavy dragoons, though we have understood that they bear the fatigues and privations, incident to long campaigns, much better.

The imperial guard was composed, like the Russian guard, of picked men, who had already served a certain length of time, and the pay being higher than of the regiments of the line, and great pains being uniformly taken to preserve them, as much as possible, from the hardships and dangers to which the other troops were exposed, and to reserve them for great emergencies, it was at once an honour and a reward to belong to them. We saw a review of the elite of the imperial guard on the 8th of May 1814, in presence of the King of France; the regiments of cavalry, of which a great number passed, were very weak in numbers, but the men were uncommonly fine, and the horses strong and active. The finest regiment of infantry of the old guard, with some pieces of cannon, did not defile before the King, but passed out of the Cour de Carousel by a back way, on account, as we understood, of its having shewn strong symptoms of disgust on the entrance of the King into Paris. That regiment, as well as all the rest of the infantry of the old

guard, then called the Grenadiers Français, whom we had ever occasion to see, was composed of the finest men, in point of strength and military appearance. The few pieces of artillery of the guard that we saw, were in very bad condition, and their equipment particularly mean; but this branch of the service had not then had time to repair the losses it had sustained in the campaign.

The cavalry of the guard appeared to have been the most fashionable service under Napoleon. There were cuirassiers heavy and light, dragoons, chasseurs, hussars, grenadiers *à cheval*, and lancers of the guard, all of whom had different and splendid uniforms, and presented an uncommonly varied and magnificent appearance when reviewed together. Their magnificence and variety was evidently intended to gratify the taste of the French people for splendid shows, and to attract young men of fortune and expensive habits.

The imperial guard had much more of the air and manner, as well as dress, of regular soldiers, than any other part of the French army; indeed it is impossible to conceive a more martial or imposing figure than that of one of the old grenadiers, (commonly called the *vieux moustaches*,) in his striking and appropriate costume, armed with his musket and sword, the cross of the legion of honour on his breast, his rough and weather-beaten countenance, bearing the impression of the sun of Italy and the snows of Russia, while his keen and restless eye

shows, more expressively than words, that he is still "ready, aye ready, for the field."

We thought we could discern in the countenances of the troops of different nations, whom we saw reviewed about this time, the traces of the difference of national character. The general expression of the Russians, we thought, was that of stern obstinate determination; of the Prussians, warm enthusiastic gallantry; of the French, fierce and indignant impetuosity. This may have been fancy, but all who have seen the troops of these different nations, will allow a very striking difference of expression of countenance, as well as of features.

No measure was omitted by Napoleon to secure the services, in the army, of all who could be of any use in it. The organization of the garde d'honneur was intended to include as large a number as possible of the young men, whose circumstances had enabled them to avoid the conscription. No act of the imperial Government seemed to have given more general offence in France than the formation of this corps, the number of which was stated to have amounted at one time to 10,000. They were, in the first instance, invited to volunteer, under the assurance that they were to be employed as a guard for Maria Louisa, and under no circumstances to be sent across the Rhine. A maximum and minimum number were fixed for each *arrondissement*, some number between which was to be made up by voluntary enrolments; but when any deficiency was

discovered, as for example, in Holland, where the young men were very little disposed to voluntary service in the French army, a ballotting immediately took place, and a number greater than the maximum was compelled to come forward. Exemption from this service was impossible; immense sums were offered and refused. They were all mounted, armed and clothed at their own expence; those who did not chuse to march, were sent off under an escort of gens-d'armes; and all were conducted to the fortresses on the Rhine, where they were regularly drilled. Some of them were induced to volunteer for extended service, by a promise, that after serving one campaign, they should be made officers; and in the course of the campaign of 1813, *all* of them were brought up to join the army; and these young men, taken only a few weeks before from their families, where many of them had been accustomed to every luxury and indulgence, were compelled to go through all the duties and fatigues of common hussars. Some regiments of them, which were very early brought into action, having misconducted themselves, were immediately disbanded; their horses, arms, and uniforms, were taken from them for the use of the other troops, and they were dismissed, to find the best of their way to their homes. Those who remained were distributed among the different corps of cavalry, and suffered very severely in the campaign in France. We spoke to some of them at Paris, who said they had bivouacked, at one period of the campaign, *on snow*, fourteen nights successive-

ly, and described to us the action at Rheims, one of the last that was fought, where half of their regiment were left on the field. These men complained loudly of the treacherous conduct of Napoleon to them and their brethren of the same corps; yet they expressed their willingness to undergo all their sufferings again, if they could thereby transfer the date of the peace to the other side of the Rhine.

The effect of this measure on the middling and higher ranks, however, was not more oppressive than that of the conscription on the lower ranks, and even on persons in tolerably good circumstances; for we have heard of L.400 sterling being twice paid to rescue an individual, whom a third conscription had at length torn from his family. The impression produced in France, however, by either of these measures, cannot be judged of from a comparison with the feelings so often manifested in this country, under circumstances of less aggravated affliction. The same careless, unthinking, constitutional cheerfulness, which is so commendable in those Frenchmen, whose sufferings are all personal, displays itself in a darker point of view, when they are called on to sympathise with the sufferings of their friends. It is a disposition, allied indeed to magnanimity on the one hand, but to selfishness on the other. The sufferings of the French on such an occasion as the loss of a near relation, may be acute; but they are of very short duration. In Paris, mourning is at present hardly ever worn. At the time when we were there, although a bloody campaign had only

recently been concluded, we did not see above five or six persons in mourning, and even these were not certainly French. We understood it to be a principle all over France, never to wear mourning for a son; but whether this was adopted in compliance with the wishes of Napoleon, as was stated by some, or was general before his time, as others maintained, we were not sufficiently informed.

It may be a question, whether the real, as well as professed motive of the policy of Napoleon, while he directed the affairs of France, was some ill-conceived, and absurd idea of the superior happiness and prosperity which France might enjoy, if placed indisputably at the head of the civilised world, and especially if elevated above the rivalship of England; but if the good of France was really his end, it is quite certain that it engaged very little of his attention, and that he occupied himself almost exclusively with regard to the means, which he held to be necessary to its attainment. The causes of the wars in which he engaged were of little importance to him; but the immediate object of all of them was the glory and aggrandizement of France; and to this object his whole soul was devoted, and all the energies of the state were directed.

In a general view, the imperial government may be said to have rested on the following foundations.

In the first place, it rested on the principle which was universally acted on, of giving active employment, and animating encouragement, to all men of

talents or enterprise—to all whose friendship might be useful, or whose enmity might be dangerous. The conscription carried off the flower of the youthful population; parents were encouraged to send their children, if they shewed any superior abilities, to the military schools, where they were rapidly promoted in the army. The formation of the garde d'honneur effectually prevented all danger from a numerous class of men, whose circumstances might have enabled them to exert themselves in opposing public measures. In the civil administration of the country, it was the system of Napoleon, from the beginning of his career, to give employment to all who might be dangerous, if their services were not secured. The prefects of towns and *arrondissements*, were generally men of intelligence and information regarding the characters of the inhabitants; and the persons recommended by them to the immense number of situations in the police, in the collection of taxes, &c. were always men of activity, enterprise, and ability: Birth, education, and moral character, were altogether disregarded, and religious principle was rather considered a fault, than a recommendation.

The consequence was, that the young, the bold, the active, the enterprising, the independent, were either attached to the imperial government, or at least prevented from exerting themselves in opposition to it; while those whom family cares, or laborious occupations, or habits of indolence, or want of energy of mind, rendered unfit for resistance to any

government, were the only people whose interest it was to oppose that of Napoleon.

In the next place, while much was done by these means to secure the support of the most important part of the nation to the imperial government, the most effectual precautions were taken to prevent danger to it, from those whom either principle might lead, or injuries might provoke to disaffection. The police was everywhere so powerful, and the system of espionage so universally extended, that it was almost impossible for different individuals to combine against the government. Without including the hosts of douaniers, who were under the orders of the collectors of taxes, the gens d'armerie, who were at the disposal of the police, and had no other duties to perform, amounted to above 10,000 men, cavalry and infantry, all completely armed and equipped. As soon, therefore, as any individual excited suspicion, there was no difficulty as to his apprehension. The number of police officers was very great, and they were all low born, clever, unprincipled men, perfectly fitted for their situations. The extent and accuracy of the information possessed by them was almost incredible. Indeed, we regard the system of espionage, by which this information was procured, as the most complete and damning proof of the general selfishness and immorality of the French people, of which we have received any account. It was not merely that a number of persons were employed by the police as spies; but that no man could put any confidence even in his best

friends and nearest relations. The very essence of the system, was the destruction of all confidence between man and man; and its success was such, that no man would venture to express any sentiments hostile to the government, even in the retirement of his own family circle. That sacred sanctuary was every where invaded, not by the strong hand of power, but by the secret machinations of bribery and intrigue.

We were particularly informed, with respect to the establishment of the police in Amsterdam, where the sentiments of the people being known to be averse to French dominion, it was of course made stronger than in less suspicious parts of the country. Within a week after the annexation of Holland to France, the police was in full force, and the spies every where in motion. No servant was allowed to engage himself who had not a certificate from the police, implying his being a spy on his master. At the *tables d'hôte*, persons were placed to encourage seditious conversation, and those who expressed themselves strongly, were soon after seized and committed to prison. No person could leave Amsterdam, even to go three miles into the country, without a passport from the police, which was granted only to whom they pleased. When a party went out on such an excursion, they were sure to be met by some of the gens d'armerie, who already knew their names and destination, and who fixed the time of their return. From the decisions of the police there

was no appeal; and those who were imprisoned by them, (as so many of the inhabitants of Amsterdam were, that it ceased to be any reproach,) had no method of bringing on a trial, or even of ascertaining the crimes of which they were accused. Frequently individuals were transported from one part of the country to another, without any reason being assigned, and set down among strangers, to make their bread as they best could, under the inspection of the police, who instantly arrested them on their attempting to escape. This system was probably more strictly enforced in Holland than over the greater part of France, but its most essential parts were every where the same, and the information, with respect to the private characters and sentiments of individuals, was certainly more easily obtained in France than in Holland.

Such, according to the information of the most intelligent and best informed persons with whom we had an opportunity of conversing, were the principal means by which the power of Napoleon was maintained, and his authority enforced. But it must be owned that he did more than this, that during the greater part of his reign, he not only commanded the obedience, but obtained the admiration and esteem of the majority of his subjects.

In looking for the causes of this, we shall in vain attempt to discover them in real benefits conferred on France by Napoleon. It is true, that agriculture made some progress during his reign, but this was

decidedly owing to the transference of the landed property from nobles and churchmen, to persons really interested in the cultivation of the soil, which had taken place before his time, and not to the empty and ostentatious patronage which he bestowed on it; the best proof of which is, that the main improvement that has taken place has not been, as already observed, in the principles or practice of agriculture, but in the quantity of land under tillage. It is true also, that certain manufactures have been encouraged by the exclusion of the English goods; but this partial increase of wealth was certainly not worth the expence of a year's war, and was heavily counterbalanced by the distress occasioned by his tyrannical decrees in the commercial towns of France, and of the countries which were subjected to her control.

As a single instance of this distress, we may just notice the situation of the city of Amsterdam during the time that Holland was incorporated with France. Out of 200,000 inhabitants of that city, more than one half, during the whole of that time, were absolutely deprived of employment, and subsisted merely on the charity of the remainder, who were, for the most part, unable to engage in any profitable business, all foreign commerce being at an end, and lived therefore on the capital which they had previously acquired. The population of the town fell off about 20,000 during the time of its connection with France; the taxes, while the two countries were incorporated, were enormous; the income-tax,

which was independent of the droits reunis, or assessed taxes, having been stated to us at one-fifth of every man's income. It was during the pressure of these burdens that the tremendous system of police which we have described was enforced; and to add to the miseries of the unfortunate inhabitants of this and the other commercial towns of Holland, they were not allowed to manifest their sufferings. Every man who possessed or inhabited a house was compelled to keep it in perfect repair; so that even at the time of their liberation, these towns bore no external mark of poverty or decay. The consequence of that decree, however, had been, that persons possessing houses at first lowered their rents, then asked no rents at all; happy to get them off their hands, and throw on the tenants the burden of paying taxes for them and keeping them in repair; and lastly, in many instances, offered sums of money to bribe others to live in their houses, or even accept the property of them.

The taxes of France, under Napoleon, it would have been supposed, were alone sufficient to exasperate the people against them. They were oppressive, not merely from their amount, but especially from the arbitrary power which was granted to the prefects of towns and *arrondissements*, and their agents, in collecting them. A cerain sum was directed to be levied in each district, and the apportioning of this burden on the different inhabitants was left almost entirely to the discretion of these officers.

It is quite obvious, therefore, as we already hinted, that the popularity of Napoleon in France, during at least the greater part of his reign, can be traced to no other source than the national vanity of the French. As they are more fond of shew than of comfort in private life, so their public affections are more easily won by gaudy decorations than by substantial benefits. Napoleon gave them enough of the former; they had victories abroad and *spectacles* at home—their capital was embellished—their country was aggrandised—their glory was exalted; and if he had continued successful, they would still have continued to applaud and admire him, unmindful of the chains which every succeeding victory served only to rivet about their own necks.

As it was not Napoleon who made the French a military and ambitious people, so it is not his fall alone that can secure the world against the effects of their military and ambitious spirit. It is not merely the removal of him who has so long guided it, but the extinction of the spirit itself that is necessary. The effect of the late events on the active part of the population of France, cannot be accurately judged of in the present moment of irritation and disorder; but whatever government that country may ultimately assume, it may surely be hoped, that their experience of unsuccessful and calamitous war has been sufficient to incline them to peace; that they will learn to measure their national glory by a better standard than mere victory or noise; that

they will reflect on the true objects, both of political and military institutions, and acknowledge the happiness of the people they govern, to be the supreme law of kings, and the blessings of the country they serve to be the best reward of soldiers.

CHAPTER IX.

JOURNEY TO FLANDERS.

When we left Paris, we took the road to Soissons and Laon, with a view to see the seat of war during the previous campaign, and examine the interesting country of Flanders. After passing the village of La Villette, and the heights of Belleville, the country becomes flat and uninteresting, and is distinguished by those features which characterise almost all the level agricultural districts of France. The road, which is of great breadth and paved in the centre, runs through a continued plain, in which, as far as the eye can reach, nothing is to be discerned but a vast expanse of corn fields, varied at intervals by fallows, and small tracks of lucerne and sainfoin. No inclosures are to be met with; few woods are seen to vary the uniformity of the view;

and the level surface of the ground is only broken at intervals, by the long rows of fruit-trees, which intersect the country in different directions, or the tall avenues of elm between which the *chaussees* are placed.

These elm trees would give a magnificent appearance to the roads, both from their age and the immense length during which they fringe its sides, were it not that they are uniformly clipt to the very top, for firewood, by the peasantry, and that all their natural beauty is in consequence destroyed. The elm, indeed, pushes out its shoots to replace the branches which have been destroyed, and fringes the lofty stem with a cluster of foliage; but as soon as these young branches have become large, they too are in their turn sacrificed to the same purpose. When seen from a distance, accordingly, these trees resemble tall may-poles with tufts at their tops, and are hardly to be distinguished from the Lombardy poplars, which, in many parts of the country, line the sides of the principal roads.

One most remarkable circumstance in the agricultural districts of France, is here to be seen in its full extent. The people do not dwell in detached cottages, placed in the centre of their farms or their properties, as in all parts of England; they live together in aged villages or boroughs, often at the distance of two or three miles from the place of their labour, and wholly separated from the farms which they are employed in cultivating. It is no uncommon thing accordingly, to see a farmer leaving a

little town in the morning with his ploughs, and horses, to go to his piece of ground, which lies many miles from the place of his residence.

This circumstance, which exists more or less in every part of France, is characteristic of the state in which the people were placed in those remote periods, when their habits of life were originally formed. It indicates that popular degradation and public insecurity, when the poor were compelled to unite themselves in villages or towns, for protection from the banditti, whom the government was unable to restrain, or from the more desolating oppression of feudal power. In every country of Europe, in which the feudal tyranny long subsisted; in Spain, in France, in Poland, and in Hungary, this custom has prevailed to a certain extent, and the remains of it are still to be seen in the remoter parts of Scotland. It is in countries alone whose freedom has long subsisted; in Switzerland, in Flanders, and in England, that no traces of its effects are to be discerned in the manners and the condition of the peasantry; that the enjoyment of individual security has enabled the poor to spread themselves in fearless confidence over the country, and that the traveller, in admiring the union of natural beauty with general prosperity, which the appearance of the country exhibits, blesses that government, by the influence of whose equal laws, that delightful union has been effected.

In the neighbourhood of Paris, and in those situations which are favourable for vineyard or garden

cultivation, this circumstance gives a very singular aspect to the face of the country. As far as the eye can reach, the sloping banks, or rising swells, are cultivated with the utmost care, and intersected by little paths, which wind through the gardens, or among the vineyards, in the most beautiful manner; yet no traces of human habitation are to be discerned, by whose labour, or for whose use this admirable cultivation has been conducted. The labourers, or proprietors of these gardens, dwell at the distance of many miles, in antiquated villages, which resemble the old boroughs, which are now wearing out in the improved parts of Scotland. In the greater part of France, the people dwell in this manner, in crowded villages, while the open country, every where cultivated, is but seldom inhabited. The superiority, accordingly, in the beauty of those districts, where the cottages are sprinkled over the country, and surrounded by fruit-trees, is greater than can well be imagined: and it is owing to this circumstance that Piccardy, Artois, and Normandy, exhibit so much more pleasing an appearance, than most of the other provinces of France.

In the district between Paris and Soissons, as in almost every other part of the country, the land is now in the hands of the peasantry, who became proprietors of it during the struggles of the revolution. We had every where occasion to observe the extreme industry with which the people conduct their cultivation, and perceived numerous instances of the truth of Mr Young's observation, "that there

"is no such instigator to severe and incessant labour, as the minute subdivision of landed property." But though their industry was uniformly in the highest degree laudable, yet we could not help deploring the ignorant and unskilful manner in which this industry is directed. The cultivation is still carried on after the miserable rotation which so justly excited the indignation of Mr Young, previous to the commencement of the revolution. Wheat, barley or oats, sainfoin, lucerne or clover, and fallow, form the universal rotation. The green crops are uniformly cut and carried into the house for the cattle; as there are no inclosures, there is no such thing as pasturage in the fields, and except once on the banks of the Oise, we never saw cattle pasturing in those of France. The small quantity of lucerne and sainfoin, moreover, shews that there are but few herds in this part of France, and that meat, butter, or cheese, form but a small part of the food of the peasantry. Normandy, in fact, is the only pasture district of France, and the produce of the dairy there is principally intended for the markets of Paris.

The soil is apparently excellent the whole way, composed of a loam in some places, mixed with clay and sand, and extremely easily worked. Miserable fallows are often seen, on which the sheep pick up a wretched subsistence—their lean sides and meagre limbs, exhibit the effects of their scanty food which they are able to obtain. The ploughing to us appeared excellent; but we were unable to

determine whether this was to be imputed to the skilfulness of the labourer, or the light friable nature of the soil.

The property of the peasantry is not surrounded by any enclosures, nor are there any visible marks whereby their separate boundaries could be determined by the eye of a stranger. The plain exhibits one unbroken surface of corn or vineyards, and appears as if it all formed a part of one boundless property. This vast expanse, however, is in fact subdivided into an infinite number of small estates, the proprietors of which dwell in the aged boroughs through which the road occasionally passes, and the extremities of which are marked by great stones fixed on their ends, which are concealed from a passenger by the luxuriant corn in which they are enveloped. This description applies to the grain districts in almost every part of France.

Although the condition of the peasantry has been greatly ameliorated, in consequence of the division of landed property since the revolution, yet their increased wealth has not yet had any influence on the state of their habitations, or the general comfort of their dwellings. This arises from the nature of the contributions to which they were subjected during the despotic governments which succeeded the first years of the revolution. These contributions were levied by the governors of districts in the most arbitrary manner. The arrondissement was assessed at a certain sum by the government, or a certain contribution for the support of the war was imposed;

and the sum was proportioned out among the different inhabitants, according to the discretion of the collector. Any appearance of comfort, accordingly, among the peasantry, was immediately followed by an increased contribution, and heavier taxes; and hence the people never ventured to make any display of their increased wealth in their dwellings, or in any article of their expenditure, which might attract the notice of the collectors of the imperial revenue. The burdens to which they were subjected, moreover, especially during the last years of the war, were extremely severe, arising both from the enormous sums requisite to save their sons from the conscription, and the heavy unequal contributions to which they were subjected.

From these causes, the division of landed property has not yet produced that striking amelioration in the habits and present comfort of the peasantry, which generally attend this important measure; and their wealth is rather hoarded up, after the eastern custom, for future emergencies, or spent in the support of an early marriage, and never lavished in the fearless enjoyment of present opulence.

In some respects, however, their appearance evidently bears the mark of the improvement in their situation. Their dress is upon the whole neat and comfortable, covered in general by a species of smock frock of a light blue colour, and exhibiting none of that miserable appearance, which Mr Young described as characterising the labouring classes during his time. They evidently had the aspect of being

well fed, and both in their figures and dress, afforded a striking contrast to the wretched and decrepid inhabitants of the towns, in whom the real poverty of the people, under the old regime, was still perceptible. In some of these towns, the appearance of the beggars, their extraordinary figures, and tattered dress, exhibited a spectacle which would have been inconceivably ludicrous, were it not for the melancholy idea of abject poverty which it necessarily conveyed.

About twenty miles from Soissons, the road passes through the magnificent forest of Villars Coterets, which, in the luxuriance and extent of its woods, rivals the forest of Fontainbleau. The place on which it stands is varied by rising grounds, and the distance exhibits beautiful vistas of forest scenery and gentle swells, adorned by rich and varied foliage. It wants, however, those grand and striking features, that mixture of rock and wood, of forest gloom and savage scenery, which give so unrivalled a charm to the forest of Fontainbleau.

From Villars Coterets, the road lies over a high plateau, covered with grain, and exhibiting more than ordinary barrenness and desolation. After passing over this dreary track, you arrive at the edge of a steep declivity, which shelves down to the valley in which the Aisne wanders. The appearance of this valley is extremely beautiful. It is sheltered by high ridges, or sloping hills, covered with vineyards, orchards, and luxuriant woods; the little plain is studded with villas and neat cottages, embosomed in

trees, or surrounded by green meadows, in which the winding course of the Aisne can at intervals be discerned. When we reached this spot, the sun had newly risen; his level rays illuminated the white cottages with which the valley is sprinkled, or glittered on the stream which winded through its plain; while the Gothic towers of Soissons threw a long shadow over the green fields which surrounded its walls. It reminded us of those lines in Thomson, in which the effect of the morning light is so beautifully described:

> "Lo, now apparent all,
> Aslant the dew-bright earth and coloured air,
> He looks in boundless majesty abroad,
> And sheds the shining day, that burnished plays
> On rocks, and hills, and towers, and wandering streams,
> High gleaming from afar."

The descent to Soissons is through a declivity adorned by thriving gardens and neat cottages, detached from each other, which afforded a pleasing contrast to the solitary uninhabited, though cultivated plains through which our route had previously lain. The Fauxbourgs of the town were wholly in ruins, having been totally destroyed in the three assaults which they had sustained during the previous campaigns. The town itself is small, surrounded by decayed fortifications, and containing nothing of note, except the Gothic spires, which bear testimony to its antiquity.

On leaving Soissons on the road to Laon, you go

for two miles through the level plain in which the town is situated; after which you begin to ascend the steep ridge by which its eastern boundary is formed. It was on the summit of this ridge that Marshal Blucher's army was drawn up, 80,000 strong, at the time when a detachment of his troops, under Count Langeron, was defending Soissons against the French army. Immediately below this position, there is placed a small village, which bore the marks of desperate fighting: all the houses were unroofed or shattered in every part by musket balls; and many seemed to have been burnt during the struggles, of which it was formerly the theatre. There is an old castle a little higher up the ascent, which was garrisoned by the allied troops; in the neighbourhood of which, we perceived numerous traces of the immense bivouacs which had been made round its walls; particularly the bodies of horses and oxen, which the Russians had left on the ground, and which the peasants had taken no pains to remove.

From thence, the road runs over a high level plateau, covered with miserable corn, or worse fallows, and having an aspect of sterility very different from what we had been accustomed to in the rich provinces of France. In the midst of this dreary country, we beheld with delight several deep ravines, formed by streams which fall into the Aisne, sheltered from the chilling blasts that sweep along the high plains by which they are surrounded, the steep sides of which were clothed with luxuriant woods, and in the bot-

tom of which are placed many little farms and cottages, which exhibited a perfect picture of rural beauty. Even here, however, the terrible effects of war were clearly visible; these sequestered spots had been ravaged by the hostile armies; and the ruined walls of the peasants dwellings presented a melancholy spectacle in the midst of the profusion of beauty with which they were surrounded.

Half way between Soissons and Laon, is placed a solitary inn, at which Bonaparte stopt six hours, after the disastrous termination of the battle of Laon. The people informed us, that during this time, he was in a state of great agitation, wrote many different orders, which he destroyed as fast as they were done, and covered the floor with the fragments of his writing. Many Cossacs and Bashkirs had been quartered in this inn; the people, as usual, would not allow them any good qualities, but often repeated, with evident chagrin—" Ils mangent comme des " diables; ils ont mangé, tous les poulets."

The features of the country continue with little variety till you begin to descend from the high plateau, over which the road has passed into the wooded valley, in the centre of which the hill and town of Laon are placed. The dreary aspect of this plateau, which, though cultivated in every part, exhibited few traces of human habitation, was enlivened occasionally by herds of pigs, of a lean and meagre breed, (followed by a shepherd of the most grotesque appearance,) wandering over the bare fal-

lows, and seemingly reduced to the necessity of feeding on their mother earth.

At the distance of six miles from Laon, the descent begins to the plain below, down the side of a deep ravine, beautifully clothed with woods and vineyards. On the other side of this ravine lies the plateau on which the battle of Craone was fought, whose level desolate surface seemed a fit theatre for the desperate struggle that was there maintained. At the bottom of the ravine, the road passes a long line of villages, surrounded with wood and gardens, which had been wholly ruined by the operations of the armies; and among the neighbouring woods we were shewn numerous graves, both of the French and Russian soldiers.

The approach to Laon lies through a great morass, covered in different places with low brushwood, and intersected only by the narrow chaussee on which the road is laid. The appearance of the town is very striking; standing on a hill in the centre of a plain of 10 or 12 miles in diameter, bounded on all sides by steep and wooded ridges. It is surrounded by an old wall, and some decayed towers, and is adorned by some fine Gothic spires, whose apparent magnitude is much increased by the elevated station on which they are placed.

In crossing this chaussee, we were immediately struck with the extraordinary policy of Bonaparte, in attacking the Russian army posted on the heights of Laon, where his only retreat was by the narrow road we were traversing, which, for many miles, ran

through a morass, impassable for carriages or artillery. This appeared the more wonderful, as the army he was attacking was more numerous than his own, composed of admirable troops, and posted in a position where little hopes of success could be entertained. It was an error of the same kind as he committed at Leipsic, when he gave battle to the allied armies with a single bridge and a long defile in his rear. It is laid down as one of the first maxims of war, by Frederick the Great, " never to fight an " enemy with a bridge or defile in your rear; as, if " you are defeated, the ruin of the army must ensue " in the confusion which the narrowness of the re- " treat creates." We cannot suppose so great a general as Bonaparte to have been ignorant of so established a principle, or a rule which common sense appears so obviously to dictate; it is more probable, that in the confidence which the long habit of success had occasioned, he never contemplated the possibility of a defeat, nor took any measures whatever for ensuring the safety of his army in the event of a retreat. Be this as it may, it is certain that he fought at Laon with a morass, crossed by a single chaussee, in his rear, and that if he had been totally defeated, instead of being repulsed in the action which then took place, his army must have been irretrievably ruined, in the narrow line over which their retreat was of necessity conducted.

At the foot of the hill of Laon is placed a small village named Semilly, in which a desperate conflict had evidently been maintained. The trees were

riddled with the cannon-shot; the walls were pierced for the fire of infantry, and the houses all in ruins, from the showers of balls to which they had been exposed. The steep declivity of the hill itself was covered with gardens and vineyards, in which the allied army had been posted during the continuance of the conflict; but though three months had not elapsed since the period when they were filled with hostile troops, no traces of desolation were to be seen, nor any thing which could indicate the occurrence of any extraordinary events. The vines grew in the utmost luxuriance on the spot where columns of infantry had so recently stood, and the garden cultivation appeared in all its neatness, on the very ground which had been lately traversed by all the apparatus of modern warfare. It would have been impossible for any one to have conceived that the destruction they occasioned could so soon have been repaired; or that the powers of Nature, in that genial climate, could so rapidly have effaced all traces of the desolation which marked the track of human ambition.

The town of Laon itself contains little worthy of note, but the view from its ramparts, though not extensive, was one of the most pleasing which we had seen in France. The little plain with which the town is surrounded, is varied with woods, cow-folds, and vineyards; the view is closed on every side by a ridge of hills, which form a circular boundary round its farthest extremity, while the foreground is finely marked by the decaying towers of

the fortress, or the dark foliage which shades its ramparts.

We walked over the field of battle with a degree of interest, which nothing but the memorable operations of which it had formerly been the theatre, could possibly have excited. The accounts of the action, which we received from the inhabitants of the town, and peasantry in its vicinity, agreed perfectly with the official details which we had previously read; and although we could not give an opinion with confidence on a military question, it certainly appeared to us, that the operations of the French army had been ill combined. Indeed, some French officers with whom we conversed on the next day, allowed that the battle had been ill fought, but, as usual, laid all the blame upon Marmont. The main body of the French army, advancing by the road from Soissons, attacked the villages of Ardoun and Semilly in front of the town, on the centre of Marshal Blucher's position, and his right wing, which was posted in the intersected ground to the west of the town, on the morning of the 9th of March. These parts of the position were occupied chiefly by the corps of Woronzoff and Buloff, and as they were very strong, no impression was made on them, and the troops who defended them maintained themselves, without support from the reserves, during the whole day. Late in the evening, the corps of Marmont, with a body of cavalry under Arrighi, appeared on the road from Rheims, advancing apparently without any communication or

concert with the troops under Napoleon in person, (who were drawn up, for the most part, in heavy columns, in the immediate vicinity of the Soissons road), and made a furious attack on the extreme left of Marshal Blucher's position. The Marshal being satisfied by this time, that the troops in position about the town, were adequate to the defence of it against Napoleon's force, was enabled to detach the whole corps of York, Kleist and Sachen, with the greater part of his cavalry, to oppose Marmont, who was instantly overthrown, cut off from all communication with Napoleon, and driven across the Aisne, with the loss of four or five thousand prisoners, and 40 pieces of cannon. The only assistance which Napoleon could give him in his retreat, was by renewing the attack on Ardoun and Semilly, which he did next morning, and maintained the action during the whole of the 10th, with no other effect, than preventing the pursuit of Marmont from being followed up with the vigour which might otherwise have been displayed by the Silesian army, notwithstanding the fatigues which they had undergone at that time, during six weeks of continued marching and fighting.

The village of Athies, where the contest with Marmont's corps was decided, containing about 200 houses, had been completely burnt in the time of the action; and, when we were there, little progress had been made in rebuilding it, but the inhabitants, then living in temporary sheds, displayed their usual cheerfulness and equanimity; they were

very loud in reprobation of the military conduct of Marmont, and very anxious to convince us, that the French had been overwhelmed only by great superiority of numbers, and that the allies might have completely cut off the retreat of Marmont towards Rheims, if they had known how to profit by their success.

June 8th, we left Laon at sunrise, and took the road to St Quintin. For a few miles the road passes through the plain in which the town is placed, after which it enters a pass, formed between the sloping hills, by which its boundary is marked. These hills are, for the most part, soft and green, like those on the banks of the Yarrow in Scotland, but varied, in some places, by woods and orchards; and their lower declivities are every where covered by vineyards and garden cultivation. Near their foot is placed the village of Cressy, which struck us as the most comfortable we had seen in France. The houses are all neat and substantial, covered with excellent slated roofs, and lighted by large windows, each surrounded by a little garden, and exhibiting a degree of comfort rarely to be met with among the dwellings of the French peasantry. On inquiry, we found that those peasants had long been proprietors of their houses, with the gardens attached, and had each a vineyard on the adjoining heights. The effects of long established property, were here very apparent in the habits of comfort and industry, which, in process of time, it had in-

grafted upon the dispositions and wishes of the people.

After passing the ridge of little hills, through banks clothed with hanging woods, the road descends into a little circular valley, surrounded on all sides by rising grounds, which presented a scene of the most perfect rural beauty. The upper part of the hills were covered with luxuriant woods, whose flowing outline suited the expression of softness and repose, by which the scene was distinguished; on the declivities below the wood, the vineyards, garden and fruit-trees, covered the sunny banks which descended into the plain, while the lower part of the valley was filled with a village, embosomed in fruit-trees, ornamented only by a simple spire. It is impossible for language to convey an adequate idea of the beauty of this exquisite scene; it united the interest of romantic scenery with the charm of cultivated nature, and seemed placed in this sequestered valley, to combine all that was delightful in rural life. When we first beheld it, the sun was newly risen; his increasing rays threw a soft light over the wooded hills, and illuminated the summit of the village spire; the grass and the vines were still glittering in the morning dew, and the songs of the peasants were heard on all sides, cheering the beginning of their early labour. The marks of cultivation, harmonized with the expression by which the scene was characterized; they were emblematic only of human happiness, and had a tendency to induce the momentary belief, that in this seques-

tered spot the human species shared in the fulness of universal joy.

As we descended into the valley, we perceived a great chateau near the western extremity of the village of Fodrang, which appeared still to be inhabited, and had none of the appearance of decay by which all that we had hitherto seen were distinguished. It belongs to the Chevalier Brancas, who is proprietor of this and seven or eight of the adjoining villages, and whose estates extend over a great part of the surrounding country. On enquiry, we found that this great proprietor had, long before the revolution, pursued a most enlightened and indulgent conduct towards his peasantry, giving them leases of their houses and gardens of 20 or 30 years, and never removing any even at the expiration of that period, if their conduct had been industrious during its continuance. The good effects of this liberal policy have appeared in the most striking manner, not only in the increased industry and enlarged wealth of the tenants; but in the moderate, loyal conduct which they pursued, during the eventful period of the revolution. The farmers on this estate are some of the richest in France; many being possessed of a capital of 15,000 or 16,000 francs, (from L.750 to L.800 Sterling,) a very large sum in that country, and amply sufficient for the management of the farms which they possessed. Their houses are neat and comfortable in the most remarkable degree, and the farm-steadings as extensive and substantial as in the most improved districts of England. The

ground is cultivated with the utmost care, and the industry of the peasants is conspicuous in every part of agricultural management. It was impossible, on comparing these prosperous dwellings with the decayed villages in most other parts of the country, not to discern, in the clearest manner, the salutary influence of individual security upon the labouring classes; and the tendency which the certainty of enjoying the fruits of their labour has, not merely in increasing their present industry, but awakening those wishes of improvement, and engendering those habits of comfort which are the only true foundation of public happiness.

During the revolution, when the peasants of all the adjoining estates violently dispossessed their landlords of their property; when every adjoining chateau exhibited a scene of desolation and ruin; the peasants of this estate were remarkable for their moderate and steady conduct; so far from themselves pillaging their seigneur, they formed a league for his defence—" Ils l'ont sontenùs," as they themselves expressed it—*and he continued throughout, and is now in the quiet possession of his great estate.* It is not perhaps going too far to say, that had the peasants throughout the country been treated with the same indulgence and suffered to enjoy the same property as in this delightful district, France would have been spared from all the horrors and all the sufferings of her revolution.

From Fodrang to La Fere, the country is, for the most part, flat; and the road, which is shaded by

lofty trees, skirts the edge of a great forest, which stretches as far as the eye can reach to the left, and joins with the forest of Villars Coterets. For many miles the road is bordered by fruit trees, and the cottages have a most comfortable thriving appearance. To St Quintin, the face of the country is flat, though the ridge over which you pass is high; the villages have an appearance of progress and opulence about them, which is rarely to be met with in other parts of France. All the peasantry carry on manufactures in their own houses; and probably their gains are very considerable, as their houses are much more neat and comfortable than in districts which are solely agricultural, and their dress bears the appearance of considerable wealth. The cultivation in the open country still continues, in general, to be wheat, barley, clover, and fallow; but the approach to French Flanders is very obvious, both from the increased quantity of rye under cultivation, from the occasional fields of beans which are to be met with, and from the numbers of potatoes and other vegetables which are to be discerned round the immediate vicinity of the villages. In those villages the houses are whitewashed, surrounded by gardens, and have a smiling aspect.

La Fere is a small town, surrounded with trifling fortifications, containing a considerable arsenal of artillery. We were much amused, while there, with the spectacle which the market exhibited. A great concourse of people had been collected from all quarters, to purchase a number of artillery horses which

the government had exposed at a low price, to indemnify the people for the losses they had sustained during the continuance of the war. The crowds of grotesque figures which thronged the streets, the picturesque appearance of the horses that were exposed to sale, and the fierce martial aspect of the grenadiers of the old guard, a detachment of whom were quartered in the town, rendered this scene truly characteristic of the French people.

St Quintin is a neat, clean, and thriving town, resembling, both in the forms of the houses, and the opulence of the middling classes, the better sort of the county towns in England. It is the seat of considerable manufactures, which thrive amazingly under the imperial government, in consequence of the exclusion of the English commodities during the revolutionary wars. The linen manufacture is the staple branch of industry, and affords employment to the peasantry in their own houses, in every direction in the surrounding country, which is probably the cause of the thriving prosperous appearance by which they are distinguished. The great church of St Quintin, though not built in fine proportions, is striking, from the coloured glass of its windows, and its great dimensions.

The French cultivation continues, without any other change than the increased quantity of rye in the fields, and vegetables round the cottages, to the frontier of French Flanders. Still the country exhibits one unbroken sheet of corn and fallow; no inclosures are to be seen, and little wood varies the

uniformity of the prospect. In crossing a high ridge which separates St Quintin from Cambray, the road passes over the great canal from Antwerp to Parer, which is here carried for many miles through a tunnel under ground. This great work was commenced under the administration of M. Turgot, but it was not completed till the time of Bonaparte, who employed in it great numbers of the prisoners whom he had taken in Spain. The magnitude of the undertaking may be judged of from the immense depth of the hollow which was cut for it previous to the commencement of the tunnel, which is so great, that the canal, when seen from the top, has the appearance of a little stream. The course of the tunnel is marked on the surface of the ground by a line of chalky soil, which is spread above its centre, and which can be seen as far as the eye can reach, stretching over the vast ridge by which the country is traversed.

At the distance of three miles from the town of Cambray, the road crosses the frontiers of French Flanders. We had long been looking for this transition, to discover if it still exhibited the striking change described by Arthur Young, " between the " effects of the despotism of old France, which depressed agriculture, and the free spirit of the Burgundian provinces, which cherished and protected " it." No sooner had we crossed the old line of demarcation between the French and Flemish provinces, than we were immediately struck with the difference, both in the aspect of the country, the

mode of cultivation, and the condition of the people. The features of the landscape assume a totally different aspect; the straight roads, the clipt elms, the boundless plains of France are no longer to be seen; and in their place succeeds a thickly wooded soil and cultivated country. The number of villages is infinitely increased; the village spires rise above the woods in every direction, to mark the antiquity and the extent of the population: the houses of the peasants are detached from each other, and surrounded with fruit trees, or gardens kept in the neatest order, and all the features of the landscape indicate the long established prosperity by which the country has been distinguished.

Nor is the difference less striking in the mode of cultivation which is pursued. Fallows, so common in France, almost universally disappear; and in their place, numerous crops of beans, pease, potatoes, carrots and endive are to be met with. In the cultivation of these crops, manual labour is universally employed; and the mode of cultivation is precisely that which is carried on in garden husbandry. The crops are uniformly laid out in small patches of an acre or thereby to each species of vegetable; which, combined with the extreme minuteness of the cultivation, gives the country under tillage the appearance of a great kitchen garden. This singular practice, which is universal in Flanders, is probably owing to the great use of the manual labour in the operations of agriculture. Rye is very much cultivated, and forms the staple food of the peasantry.

The crops of wheat, barley, oats, rye, and clover struck us as exceedingly heavy, but not nearly so clean as those of a similar description, in the best agricultural districts of our own country.

But it is principally in the condition, manners and comfort of the people that the difference between the French and Flemish provinces consists. Every thing connected with the lower orders, indicates the influence of long-established prosperity, and the prevalence of habits produced by the uninterrupted enjoyment of individual opulence. The population of Flanders, both French and Austrian, is perfectly astonishing; the villages form an almost uninterrupted line through the country; the small towns are as numerous as villages in other parts of the world, and seem to contain an extensive and comfortable population. These small towns are particulary remarkable for the number and opulence of the middling classes, resembling in this as well as other respects, the flourishing boroughs of Yorkshire and Kent, and affording a most striking contrast to those of a very opposite description, which we had recently passed through in France.

The cottages of the peasantry, both in the villages and the open country, are, in the highest degree, neat, clean, and comfortable; built for the most part of brick, and slated in the roof; nowhere exhibiting the slightest symptoms of dilapidation. These houses have almost all a garden attached to them, in the cultivation of which the poor people display, not only extreme industry, but a degree of taste superior

to what might be expected from their condition in life: The inside bore the marks of great comfort, both from the cleanness which every where prevailed, and the costly nature of the furniture with which they were filled. Nothing could be more pleasing than the appearance of the windows, every where in the best repair, large and capacious, and furnished with shutters on the outside, painted green, which, together with the bright whiteness of the walls, gave the whole the appearance of buildings destined for ornamental purposes, rather than the abode of the lower orders of the people.

Cambray is a neat comfortable town, containing 15,000 inhabitants, and surrounded by fortifications in tolerable repair, but which, when we passed them, were not armed. It was once celebrated for its magnificent cathedral, reckoned the finest in France ; but a few ruins of this great building alone have escaped the fury of the people, during the commencement of the revolution. These trifling remains, however, were sufficient to convey some idea of the beautiful proportions in which the whole had been constructed ; they resembled much the finest part of Dryburgh Abbey, in Scotland. The modern cathedral, built near the site of the old one, has a mean exterior, but possesses considerable splendour in the inside.

From Cambray to Valenciennes, the features of the country continue the same as those we have just described. The surface of the ground is still flat, and cultivated in every part with the utmost care, in

the garden style of husbandry. We were particularly struck, in this district, by the quantity of drilled crops, the admirable order in which they are kept, and the vast numbers of people, both men, women, and children, who appeared engaged in their cultivation. Nothing, indeed, but the great demand for labour, occasioned by the use of manual labour in husbandry, could have produced, or could support the great population by which Flanders has always been distinguished.

Valenciennes, situated in one of the finest districts of Flanders, is likewise a well built, comfortable town, built entirely of brick, and surrounded by magnificent fortifications, in admirable repair. As this was the first well fortified town which we had seen, it was to us a matter of no ordinary interest, which was encreased by the remembrance of the celebrated siege which it had undergone from the English army at the commencement of the revolutionary war. We were shewn the point at which the English forced their entrance; and the numberless marks of cannon-balls which their artillery had occasioned during the siege, were still uneffaced. Though the modern fortifications, built after the model of Vauban, have not the romantic or picturesque aspect which belongs to the aged towers of Montrieul, Abbeville, or Laon, or the more ruinous walls of the town of Lonway, yet they present a pleasing spectacle, arising partly from the regularity of the forms themselves, and partly from the association with which they are connected.

From Valenciennes to Mons, the country is still flat, though the cultivation and the aspect of the scene is somewhat varied from what had been exhibited by the districts of French Flanders, through which we had previously passed. It lies lower, and appears more subject to inundation: Ditches appear at intervals, filled with water, and extensive meadows are to be seen, covered with rank and luxuriant grass. The cultivation of grain and green crops is less frequent, and in their stead, vast tracks of rich pasture cover the face of the country. Much wood is to be seen on all sides, often of great dimensions; and the population appears still as great as before. The villages succeed one another so fast, as almost to form a continued street; and the numberless spires which rise over the woods in every direction, prove that this number of inhabitants extends over the whole country. The cottages still continue neat and comfortable; not picturesque to a painter's eye, but exhibiting the more delightful appearance of individual prosperity. Their beauty is much encreased by the quantity of wood, or the variety of fruit-trees with which the villages are interspersed. There are many coal-pits in this country, and a great deal of carriage of this valuable mineral on the principal roads. They present a scene of infinitely more bustle and activity than the richest parts of France. We met a great number of waggons, harnassed and equipped like those in England; and the quantity of carriages reminded us, in some degree, of the extraordinary appearance,

in this respect, which the approach to our own capital presents; a state of things widely different from the desolate *chaussees* which the interior of France exhibits. Every thing in the small towns and villages bore the marks of activity, industry, and increasing prosperity. We passed with much interest over the celebrated field of battle of Jemappe, where the remains of Austrian redoubts are still visible.

Mons, the frontier town of Austrian Flanders, was once a place of great strength, and underwent a dreadful siege during the wars of the Duke of Marlborough; but its ramparts are now dismantled, according to the ruinous policy of Joseph II. The square in the town is large, and has a striking appearance, owing to the picturesque and varied forms of the houses and public buildings of which it is formed. From the summit of the great steeple, to which you are conducted by a stair of 353 steps, there is a magnificent view over the adjacent country to a great distance. It is, for the most part, green, owing to the immense quantity of land under pasturage, and clothed in every direction with extensive woods. At a considerable distance we were shewn the woods and heights of *Malplaquet*, the scene of one of the Duke of Marlborough's great victories, of which the people still spoke, as if it had been one of the recent occurrences of the war. This town, when we visited it, was completely filled with Prussian and Saxon troops, whose intrepid martial appearance, bespoke that undaunted character by which they have been distinguished in the memor-

able actions, of which this country has since been the theatre.

On leaving Mons, on the road to Brussels, you quit the low swampy plain in which the town is situated, and ascend a gentle hill, clothed with wood, in the openings of which, many beautiful views of the spires of the city are to be seen. The hill itself is composed entirely of sand, and would be reckoned a rising ground in most other countries, but it forms a pleasing variety to the level plains of Flanders. From thence to Brussels, a distance of 36 miles, the scenery is beautiful in the greatest degree. Unlike the flat surface which prevails over most parts of this country, it is charmingly varied by hills and vallies, adorned by beautiful woods, whose disposition resembles rather that of trees in a gentleman's park, than what usually occurs in an agricultural country. The cottages, over the whole of this district, are particularly pleasing; everywhere white-washed, clean and comfortable; half hid by a profusion of fruit-trees, or the aged stems of elm and ash.

Brain-le-Compte, Halle, and a number of smaller towns through which the road passes, are distinguished by the neatness of the houses, and the number and opulence of the middling classes of society. The valleys are admirably cultivated in agricultural or garden husbandry, and interspersed with numerous cottages; the gentle slopes are laid out in grass or pasture, and the uplands clothed with luxuriant woods. Upon the whole, the scenery between Mons

and Brussels was the most delightful we had ever seen of a similar description, both from the richness and extent of the cultivation; the appearance of public and private property, which was unceasingly exhibited; the beautiful variety of the ground, and the charming disposition of the woods which terminate the view. The village spires, whose summits rise above the distant woods in every direction, increased the effect which the objects of nature were fitted to produce, both from the beauty of their forms themselves, and the pleasing reflections which they awaken in the mind.

We passed through this beautiful country, in a fine summer evening, in the middle of June. The heat of the day had passed: the shades of evening were beginning to spread over the lowland country; the forest of Soignies was still illuminated by the glow of the setting sun, while his level rays shed a peaceful light over the woods which skirt the field of WATERLOO. We little thought that the scene, which was now expressive only of rest and happiness, should hereafter be the theatre of mortal combat: that the same sun which seemed now to set amid the blessings of a grateful world, should so soon illuminate a field of agony and death; and that the ground, which we now trod with no other feelings than admiration for the beauty of nature, was destined to become the field of deathless glory to the British name.

The state of agriculture from Cambray to Brussels, both in French and Austrian Flanders, is ad-

mirable. No fallows are any where to be seen, and in their place, green crops, of which beans, peas, carrots, &c. form the principal part. These green crops are kept very clean, and all worked by the spade or hoe, which furnishes employment to the immense population, which is diffused over the country. Crops of rye, which, when we passed them in the middle of June, were in full ear, are every where very common; indeed, rye bread seems to be the staple food of the peasantry. Much wheat, barley, and oats, are also cultivated, with a great deal of sainfoin and clover, which is never pastured, but cut, and carried green into the stalls of the cattle. No inclosures are to be seen, except round the orchards and gardens which surround the villages; and indeed, fences would be a useless waste of ground in a country where every corner is valuable, and no cattle are ever to be seen in the open fields. The soil seemed to be excellent throughout the whole country; sometimes sandy, and sometimes a rich loam; and the crop, both of corn, beans and grass, heavy and luxuriant. With the exception, however, of the grain crops, which are generally drilled, the fields are not nearly so clean as in the best parts of England.

The farm steadings and implements of husbandry in all parts of Flanders, are greatly superior to those in France. The waggons are not only more numerous on the roads, but greatly neater in their construction than in France; the ploughs are of a better construction, and the farm offices, both more

extensive, and in better repair. Every thing, in short, indicated a much more improved and opulent class of agriculturists, and a country in which the fundamental expences of cultivation had long been incurred.

Near Cambray, the wages of labour are one franc a-day. Near Valenciennes, and from that to Mons, they are from 1 franc to 25 sous, that is, from 10d. to 12½d. From Mons to Brussels, and round that town, from 1 franc to 30 sous, that is from 10d. to 15d. The rent of land was stated in French Flanders at 20 francs, and the price 1000 francs *per marcoti*; and from Valenciennes to Mons, from 35 to 50 francs; but we could never accurately ascertain what proportion a marcoti bore to the English acre.

One thing, as already hinted, is most remarkable in the Flemish husbandry, and prevails universally over the country, viz. the smallness of the subdivisions into which the farms are divided. There are scarce three acres in any part of Flanders in one spot, bearing the same species of crop. In general, the patches of beans, clover, rye, or wheat, are about half an acre or thereby, and never exceed two or three acres. In our own country, we had been accustomed to associate these small patches with bad cultivation; but they are by no means symptomatic of this state of things in this country. It is probably owing to the quantity of land in the hands of the peasantry, and the great use of manual labour in their system of husbandry.

The size of the farms is exceedingly various in the districts of Flanders which we have visited. From Cambray to Valenciennes, they were called from 200 to 300 *marcotis*; but from Mons to Brussels, an exceedingly well cultivated district, they seldom exceed from 50 to 100 *marcotis*; which, as as far as we could judge, was not above from 25 to 50 acres. That the size of the farms is in general exceedingly small, appears obviously from the immense number of farm houses which are every where to be seen. The course and mode of cultivation appears to be precisely the same on the great and the small farms.

The state of the people, both in French and Austrian Flanders is exceedingly comfortable; offering the most striking contrast to their external appearance in most parts of France. The houses of the peasantry, which are every where built of brick, are neat and substantial; in most places white-washed, with neat green window-shutters on the outside. Their roofs are of slate, and all parts of the building are kept in the best possible repair. Most of the houses have gardens attached to them, which are uniformly cultivated with the utmost industry. Almost all these cottages and gardens belong in property to the peasants; and no poor man, if he has been able to amass a little capital, finds any difficulty in purchasing a small freehold.

The interior of these cottages appeared much better replenished with furniture, than those of a similar description in France. Not the smallest

traces of dirt are to be seen, either in the exterior or the interior of the peasants dwellings. Their dress, as in France, is in general neat and substantial, covered with a light blue smock-frock, and without any appearance of abject want. The women, in general, appeared handsome and very well clad. Every thing, in short, bespoke a rich, prosperous, and happy population.

Brussels is a large, populous, and, in many respects, a handsome town. It stands upon the side of a hill, the lower part being the old town, and the higher the fashionable quarter. Near the centre of the old town is placed a square of considerable size, surrounded by high antiquated buildings of a most remarkable construction; and the *Hotel de Ville*, which occupies nearly one of its sides, is ornamented by a high Gothic spire of the lightest form, and the most exquisite proportions. The Cathedral is large, and has two massy towers in front; but the effect of the interior, which would otherwise be very grand, from its immense size, is much injured by statues affixed to the pillars, and an intermixture of red and white colours, with which the walls are painted. In this Cathedral, as well as in the churches throughout Flanders, which we visited, we were much struck by the numbers of people who attended service, and the earnestness with which they seemed to participate in religious duty;—a spectacle which was the more impressive, from the levity or negligence with

which we had been accustomed to see similar services attended in France.

The *Parc*, which is an immense square of splendid buildings, inclosing a great space, covered with fine timber, is probably the most magnificent square in Europe. The Royal Palace, and all the houses of the nobility, are here situated. There is nothing of the kind, either in Paris or London, which can be compared with this square, either in extent, the beauty of the private houses, or the richness and variety of the woods.

At Brussels, we saw 1500 British troops on parade, in the great square. We were particularly struck with the number and brilliant appearance of the officers. It would be going too far to say, that they understood their duty better than those of the allied armies; but they, unquestionably, have infinitely more of the appearance and manners of gentlemen. The proportion of officers to privates appeared much greater than in the other European armies; but the common soldiers had not nearly so sun-burnt, weather-beaten an appearance. Among the British troops, the Highlanders resembled more nearly the swarthy aspect of the foreign soldiers. The discipline of these troops was admirable; they were much beloved by the inhabitants, who recounted with delight numerous instances of their humanity and moderation. In this respect, they formed a striking contrast to the Prussians, whose abuses and voracity were uniformly spoken of in terms of severe reprobation.

The ramparts at Brussels, especially in the upper parts of the town, are planted with trees, and afford a delightful walk, commanding an extensive view over the adjacent country. The favourite promenade at Brussels, however, is the *Alta Vista*, situated two miles from the town, on the road to Antwerp, which forms a drive of two miles in length, under the shade of lofty trees. It was filled, when we saw it, with numerous parties of officers of all nations, principally German and British; and we could not help observing, how much more brilliant the appearance of our own countrymen was, than their brethren in any other service. Indeed they are taken from a different class of society: in the continental states, men, from inferior situations, enter the army with a view to obtain a subsistence; in the British service alone, men of rank and fortune leave the enjoyment and opulence of peaceful life, to share in the toils and the hardships of war.

The Chateau of Lacken, now the royal dwelling, stands on an eminence in the vicinity of Brussels, commanding a delightful view over the environs of the city. There are few views in Flanders so magnificent as that from the summit of this palace. It is surrounded by beautiful gardens and shrubberies, laid out in the English style, and arranged with much taste.

The vicinity of Brussels is so much clothed with wood, as to resemble, when seen from the spires of the city, a continued forest. To the south-west, indeed, the whole country is covered with the vast

forest of *Soignies*, clothing a range of gentle hills, which stretch as far as the field of Waterloo. The varieties of wood scenery, which it exhibits, are exceedingly beautiful; and, in many places, the oaks grow to an immense size, and present the most picturesque appearance. It was from this forest that Bonaparte obtained the timber for his great naval arsenal at Antwerp.

To the south of Brussels, in the direction of Liege, and in the environs of that town, the country is covered with innumerable cottages, in the neatest order, inhabited by manufacturers, who carry on, *in their own houses*, the fabrics for which that city is so celebrated. These cottagers have all their gardens and houses in property; and the appearance of prosperity, which their dwellings uniformly exhibit, as well as the neatness of their dress, and the costly nature of their fare, demonstrate the salutary influence, which this intermixture of manufacturing and agricultural occupation is fitted to have on the character and habits of the lower orders of society. It resembles, in this particular, the state of the people in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and in the beautiful scenes of the vale of Gloucester.

In the neighbourhood of Brussels, the condition of the peasantry appeared exceedingly comfortable. Their neat gardens, their substantial dwellings, their comfortable dress, indicated here, as elsewhere in Flanders, the effects of long-continued and general prosperity. Most of these houses and gardens belong in property to the peasants; others are hired

from the proprietors of the ground, but when this is the case, they generally have the advantage of a long lease. The peasants complained, in the bitterest terms, of the taxes and contributions of the French, stating that the public burdens had been more than quadrupled since they were separated from the Austrian Government, of which they still spoke in terms of affection and regret. The *impot fonciese*, or land-tax, under the French, amounted to one-fifth of the rent, or 20 *per cent.* The wages of labour were from 15 sous to one franc a-day; but the labourer dined with the farmer, his employer. Most of the land was laid out in garden cultivation, and everywhere tilled with the utmost care. The soil appeared rich and friable; and the crops, both of agricultural and garden produce, were extremely heavy. The rent was stated as varying from 60 francs to 150 francs per *journatin*, which appeared to be about three-fourths of an acre.

One thing struck us extremely in the condition of the people, both here and in other parts of Flanders—the sumptuous fare on which they live. It is a common thing to see artisans and mechanics sitting down to a dinner, at a table d'hôte, of ten or twelve dishes; such a dinner as would be esteemed excellent living in England. The lower orders of the people, the day labourers and peasants, seemed to live, generally speaking, in a very comfortable manner. Vegetables form a large portion of their food, and they are raised in large quantities, and great perfection, in all parts of the country.

On leaving Brussels, we took the road to St Malines and Antwerp. The surface of the ground the whole way is perfectly flat, and much intersected by canals, on whose banks much rich pasture is to be seen. For the first six miles, the road is varied by chateaus and villas, laid out in the stiff antiquated style of French gardening. The cultivation between Brussels and St Malines, is all conducted in the garden style, and with the most incomparable neatness; but the cottages are formed of wood and mud, and exhibited more symptoms of dilapidation, than in any other part of the country which we had seen. Whether this was the consequence of the materials of which they are built, or was the result of some local institution, we were unable to determine.

We saw a body of 3000 Prussian *landwehr* enter Brussels, shortly before we left the city. The appearance of these men was very striking. They had just terminated a march of 14 miles, under a burning sun, and were all covered with dust and sweat. Notwithstanding the military service in which they had been engaged, they still bore the appearance of their country occupations; their sun-burnt faces, their rugged features, and massy limbs, bespoke the life of laborious industry to which they had been habituated. They wore an uniform coat or frock, a military cap, and their arms and accoutrements were in the most admirable order, but, in other respects, their dress was no other than what they had worn at home. The sight of these brave men told, in stronger language than words could convey, the

grievous oppression to which Prussia had been subjected, and the unexampled valour with which her people had risen against the iron yoke of French dominion. They were not regular soldiers, raised for the ordinary service of the state, and arrayed in the costume of military life; they were not men of a separate profession, maintained by government for the purposes of defence: they were the *people of the country*, roused from their peaceful employments, by the sense of public danger, and animated by the heroic determination to avenge the sufferings of their native land. The young were there, whose limbs were yet unequal to the weight of the arms which they had to bear; the aged were there, whose strength had been weakened by a life of labour and care; all, of whatever rank or station, marched alike in the ranks which their valour and their patriotism had formed. Their appearance suited the sacred cause in which they had been engaged, and marked the magnitude of the efforts which their country had made. They were still, in some measure, in the garb of rural life; but the determination of their step, the soldier-like regularity of their motions, and the enthusiastic expression of their countenances, indicated the unconquerable spirit by which they had been animated, and told the greatness of the sufferings which had, at last, awakened

"The might that slumbers in a peasant's arm."

There is no spectacle in the moral history of man-

kind more interesting or more sublime, than that which was exhibited by the people of the north of Germany, in the last war. During the progress of the disastrous wars which succeeded the French revolution, the states of Germany experienced all the miseries of protracted warfare, and all the degradation of conquered power; but amidst the sufferings and humiliation to which they were subjected, the might of Germany was concentrating its power; the enthusiasm of her people was animating the soldier's courage, and the virtue of her inhabitants was sanctifying the soldiers camp: and when at last the hour of retribution arrived, when the sufferings of twenty years were to be revenged, and the disgrace of twenty years was to be effaced; it was by the energy of her people, that these sufferings were revenged, and the sacrifices of her people, that these victories were obtained. Crushed as they had been beneath the yoke of foreign dominion; shackled as they were by the fetters of foreign power, and unprotected as they long continued to be, from the ravages of hostile revenge; the people of PRUSSIA boldly threw off the yoke, and hesitated not to encounter all the fury of imperial ambition, that they might redeem the glory which their ancestors had acquired, and defend the land which their forefathers had preserved, while Austria yet hung in doubt between the contending Powers: While the fate of the civilized world was yet pending on the shores of the Vistula, the whole body of the Prussian people flew to arms: they left their homes, their

families, and all that was dear to them, without provision, and without defence: they trusted in God alone, and in the justice of their cause. This holy enthusiasm supported them in many an hour of difficulty, and of danger, when they were left to its support alone; it animated them in the bloody field of Juterbock, and overthrew their enemies on the banks of the Katzback; it burned in the soldier's breast under the walls of Leipsic, and sustained the soldier's fortitude in the plains of Vauchamp: it terminated not till it had planted the Prussian eagle victorious on the ruins of that power, which had affected to despise the efforts of the Prussian people.

The town of St Malines is exceedingly neat, and ornamented by a great tower, of heavy architecture, producing a striking effect from every part of the adjoining country. The interior of the church, like all the other Catholic churches, is impressive to an English spectator, from the effect of its vast dimensions. The town was entirely filled by Prussian soldiers, and landwehr of the Prussian corps d'armee of Bulow, who went through their evolutions in the exactest discipline.

From St Malines to Antwerp the country is under a higher system of management, than in any other district of Flanders which we had seen. It is thickly planted with trees, insomuch, as, from an eminence, to have the appearance of a continued forest. The landscape scenery, seen through the openings of the wood, and generally terminating in

a village spire, is exceedingly beautiful, and reminded us of the scenes in Waterloo's engravings. Great quantities of potatoes and beans are to be seen in the fields, which are kept in the highest state of cultivation. The number of the villages is extremely great; but the people, though so numerous, had all the appearance of being in a prosperous and happy condition.

On approaching Antwerp, the trees and houses are all cut down, to give room for the fire of the cannon-shot from the ramparts of the fortress. We passed over this desolated space in the evening, soon after sunset, when the spires of the city had a beautiful effect on the fading colours of the western sky. High over all rose the spire of the Cathedral, a most beautiful piece of the lightest Gothic, of immense height, and the most exquisite proportions. Though this building had stood for seven centuries, the carving of the pinnacles, and the finishing of the ornaments, are at this moment as perfect as the day they were formed; and when seen in shadow on an evening sky, present a spectacle which combines all that is majestic and graceful in Gothic architecture.

After passing through the numerous gates, and over the multiplied bridges which surround this fortress, we found ourselves in the interior of Antwerp; a city of great interest, in consequence of the warlike preparations of which it had been the theatre, and the importance which had been attached to it by both parties in the recent contest. It is an extensive old city, evidently formed for a much more

extensive commerce than it has now for a long period enjoyed. The form of the houses is singular, grotesque and irregular, offering, at every turn, the most picturesque forms to a painter's eye. We were soon conducted to the famous dock-yard, constructed by Bonaparte, which had been the source of so much uneasiness to this country; and could not help being surprised at the smallness of the means which he had been able to obtain for the overthrow of our naval power. The docks did not appear to us at all large; but they are very deep, and during the siege by the English and Prussian troops, contained 20 ships of the line, besides 14 frigates. When we saw them they were lying in the Scheldt, and being all within two miles of each other, presented a very magnificent spectacle.

In the arsenal were 14 ships of the line on the stocks, of which seven were of 120 guns; but these vessels were all demolished except one, shortly after we left them, in virtue of an article in the treaty of Paris. Bonaparte had for long been exerting himself to the utmost to form a great naval depot at Antwerp; he had not only fortified the town in the strongest possible manner, but collected immense quantities of timber and other naval stores for the equipment of a powerful fleet. The ships first built, however, had been formed of wood, which was so ill seasoned, that, ever since their construction, above 200 carpenters had been employed annually to repair the beams which were going to decay.

In the citadel, which is a beautiful fortification in

the finest order, we conversed with various English soldiers who had been in the attack on Bergen-op-Zoom, of which they all spoke in terms of the utmost horror. Its failure they ascribed not to any error in the plan of attack, which they all agreed was most skilfully combined, but to a variety of circumstances which thwarted the attack, after its success appeared to have been certain. Our troops, they said, went round the ramparts, and carried every battery; but neglecting to spike the guns, the French came behind them, and turned the guns, they had recently captured, against themselves. Much also was attributed to the hesitation occasioned by the death of the principal officers, and the unfortunate effect of the discovery of some spirit cellars, from which the soldiers could not be restrained. We were much gratified, by hearing the warm and enthusiastic manner in which even the private soldiers spoke of their gallant commander, Sir Thomas Graham. While we admired the frank, open, and independent spirit which these English soldiers in garrison at Antwerp evinced, we could not help observing, that they did not converse on military matters with nearly the same intelligence, or evince the same reflection on the manœuvres of war, as those of the French imperial guard, with whom we had spoken in a former part of our journey.

Though such extensive naval preparations had been going forward for years at Antwerp, there was not the slightest appearance of bustle or activity in the streets, or on the quays of the city. These were

as deserted, as if Antwerp had been reduced to a fishing village, indicating, in the strongest manner, that nothing but the habits of commerce, and the command of the seas, can nurse that body of active seamen, who form the only foundation of naval power.

There is a fine picture by Oels in the church of St Paul's, at Antwerp; but the church itself is built in the most barbarous taste. The cathedral is a most magnificent building, both in the outside and inside; and its spire, which is 460 feet in height, is probably the finest specimen of light Gothic in the world. Its immense aisles were filled at every hour of the day, by numbers of people, who seemed to join in the service with sincere devotion, and exhibited the example of a country, in which religious feeling was generally diffused among the people—which formed a striking contrast to the utter indifference to these subjects which universally prevails in France.

It was not a mere vain threat on the part of Napoleon, that he would burn the English manufactures. We were informed at Antwerp by eye-witnesses, that they had seen L.90,000 worth of English goods burnt at once in the great square of that city; all of which *had been bought and paid for* by the Flemish merchants. The people then spoke in terms of great sorrow, of the ruin which this barbarous policy had brought upon the people of the countries in which it was carried into effect.

In the vicinity of Antwerp, we walked over the *Counter Dyke of Couvertein*, which was the scene of

such desperate conflicts between the army of the Prince of Parma, and the troops of the United Provinces, who were advancing to the relief of Antwerp. The interest arising from the remembrance of this memorable struggle, was increased by the narrowness of the ground on which the action was maintained, being a long dyke running across the low country, which borders the banks of the Scheldt near Fort Lillo, and which alone, of all the surrounding country, was not immersed in water. Every foot, therefore, of the ground of this dyke which we trod, must have been the spot on which a desperate struggle had been maintained. In casting our eyes back to the distant spires of the city of Antwerp, we could not help entering, for an instant, into the feelings of the people who were then beseiged; and remembering that these spires, which now rose so beautifully on the distant horizon, were then crowded with people, who awaited, in dreadful anxiety, in the issue of the action that was then pending, the future fate of themselves and their children.

To those who take an interest in the delightful study of political economy, and who have examined the condition of the people in different countries, with a view to discover the causes of their welfare or their suffering, there is no spectacle so interesting as that which the situation of the people in Flanders affords. The country is uniformly populous in the extreme; go where you will, you every where meet with the marks of a dense population; yet nowhere are the symptoms of general misery to be found; nowhere does

the principle of population seem to press beyond the limits assigned for the comfortable maintenance of the human species. Flanders has exhibited, for centuries, the instance of a *numerous, dense, and happy population.* It would perhaps not be unreasonable to conclude, from this circumstance, that the doctrines now generally admitted in regard to the increase of the human species, have been received with little examination. Man possesses in himself the principles requisite for the regulation of the increase of the numbers of mankind; and where the influence of government does not interfere with their operation, they are sufficient to regulate the progress of population according to the interest and welfare of all classes of the people.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.